

L E T T E R S,
ON
E G Y P T

CONTAINING,

A Parallel between the Manners of its ancient
and modern Inhabitants, its Commerce,
Agriculture, Government and Religion;

WITH

The Descent of LOUIS IX. at DAMIETTA.

EXTRACTED FROM

JOINVILLE, AND ARABIAN AUTHORS.

TRANSLATED

From the FRENCH of M. SAVARY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

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MDCCLXXXVII.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE great attention and labour bestowed upon the present translation of these Letters, and the remarks which in the course of it have presented themselves, seem to require the following short account of what has been done.

Finding, on consulting a few of the quotations in the French, various errors had crept into the text, most of which, probably, and many, certainly, were errors of the press, it was thought necessary to refer to the original authors: those, therefore, who shall think proper to compare the translation with the French, will find many deviations in the quoted passages; but, if they shall please, further, to refer to the Latin, Greek, and Arabic writers, cited, it is presumed, they will find such deviations are not errors, but corrections. We mean not to affirm mistakes may not still exist; though we scarcely can hope sufficient credit will

be given for the labour bestowed in searching voluminous books to find a single quotation. The industry with which M. Savary has read the ancients, to obtain information on his subject, astonishes the reader; but it were to be wished, by those who are inclined to refer, and examine the accuracy or spirit of the passages cited, he had continually noted his editions, books, and pages; so that they might have been turned to without trouble. Not aware, ourselves, of the numerous quotations which were to follow in the second volume, we neglected this method, in the first, and continued so to do, partly for the sake of uniformity, and, partly, in deference to M. Savary; neither indeed could we obtain every author, or find every passage he has cited; therefore it was, in part, impracticable.

Were we to note our deviations, and support them by citing the passages in question, our preface would assume the form and length of a dissertation; we shall only say, therefore, we rest our justification on the passages themselves; and, imagining we shall not, often, at least, be detected in having

ing injured the author by our emendations, we trust we shall rather deserve applause than censure.

The spelling of words translated from languages little known, as the Coptic and Arabic are, into French, and thence re-translated into English, is a difficulty frequently found very embarrassing; nor is the French itself, in this work, always consistent. This we must plead in excuse for those few ~~places~~^{cases} where we have committed the like fault. The French spelling usually endeavours at the original pronunciation; to give which, in English, the spelling should be very different. In some few places this has occasioned us to vary from the original; but, in most, we have not dared, lest we should seem to disfigure names which the eye has been accustomed to see written in another manner. Thus the words *Cachef*, and *Eccherif*, are, as we suppose, pronounced *Cashef*, and *Echcherif*; *Boulac* is *Boolac*; *Gibel* is *Jeebel*; *Malaoui* is *Malawee*, &c. The village of *Semennoud* is, by an error of the French, not detected in time, spelt *Samanout*, on the map: We believe no other error of this kind is committed,

except so trifling as to be immediately seen, and corrected, by an intelligent reader.

Our calculation of the weight of the granite, in the note, Vol. II. page 375, differs from that of M. Savary ; but if, instead of allowing with him the sides to be sixty feet high, six feet are deducted for the thickness of the ceiling, which was of another stone, the product then will be nearly the same ; and this deduction, we imagine, the author made, it is not so expressed.

Ancient measures are frequently reduced to French, by M. Savary ; but, as the learned do not all agree in their estimates, we have generally substituted a literal translation of the Greek and Latin writers quoted ; and, in such places, used the stadium instead of the league.

The words Ox and Bull, *Bœuf* and *Taureau*, seem to have been used with a blameable indiscrimination, both by French and English writers, when speaking of ancient Egyptian deities. Apis is called the sacred Ox, by M. Savary, but it is evident this god was a Bull : he had a heifer presented him once a year, and the strange practice of the Egyptian women, related by Diodorus Siculus (lib. i.

sec. 2), and noticed by M. Savary, is a farther confirmation. Mnevis and Onuphis are spoken of in the same confused manner, though there can be little doubt they all were bulls.

We have been obliged to use the word port in the same sense with M. Savary; and apply it to towns, and villages, situated on the Nile, to which boats only, not ships, resort: though, in English, it usually implies a seaport. We have likewise adopted his spelling of the word Khalig; but the Arabic pronunciation is Khalidge. We mean not to be minute, but wish not, after all our industry, to be thought negligent.

The gentleman to whom M. Savary addressed his letters was M. Le Monnier, Physician to the King of France; first physician to Monsieur, his Majesty's eldest brother, and a member of the Academy of Sciences; the M. L. M. at the beginning of each Letter are the initials of his name, and the short eulogium at the conclusion of the work is highly to his honour: it shews to what noble purposes he employs wealth and power.

The work, in the French, is dedicated to Monsieur, eldest brother to the King of France; but we have omitted this dedication, because the mode of address is so different from any the English language is accustomed to that it would render a translation either ridiculous or full of Gallicisms.

The manner in which these letters have been received, both in France and England, is superior to any praise we can bestow; and we shall only say M. Savary possesses a degree of erudition, judgment, imagination and feeling which are seldom united.

P R E F A C E.

TRAVELS are the most instructive school of man: travelling teaches us the knowledge of our species; and, by living among different nations, studying their manners, religion, and government, rules may be obtained to estimate the manners, religion, and government of our own country. Subject to the prejudices of education, and the empire of habit, while man remains in his native land, he will view other nations through a deceptive glass, which, changing their forms and colours, will lead his judgment astray; he will be astonished at their errors, when he himself shall be tributary to others equally great; he will laugh at and ridicule their customs, himself a slave to absurdities not less extravagant.

But, having attentively examined the manners and genius of divers people, and calculated

lated how far education, laws, and climate may influence physical and moral qualities, his ideas will expand, and meditation will release him from the yoke of pre-conceived opinions, and customs by which his reason had been enchain'd. Then, looking toward his own country, the film will be removed from his eyes; his rooted mistakes will be eradicated, and objects will assume a very different aspect.

Before he begins his travels, a thorough knowledge of geography and history are necessary. The first will indicate the place where great events have passed; the latter bring them to memory: thus doubly enlightened, if he traverses those eastern countries where most astonishing revolutions have, more than once, changed the face of the earth, wherever his footsteps lead, each object will become animated; ruins, marbles, and mountains will speak, most eloquently, to his understanding and his heart. Here, beneath brambles, he will read the following inscription, with which his country honoured the manes of a hero: *Sta, viator, 'beroem calcas.* This cliff, hanging over the abyss of seas, will call to mind the fatal

fatal end of the despairing Sappho, who, by the energy and sublimity of her poetry, merited the name of the tenth muse. Here the melancholy remains of two famous republics will retrace to memory man ennobled by the love of liberty, his soul aggrandized, and every faculty of the body and mind perfectioned. How numerous will be his comparisons between what was and what is ! How immense the chain of recollection ! He, however, will only notice great actions, and present the reader with rapid strokes, where the past and present may clearly unite, and touch without being confounded.

At beholding the magnificent monuments Egypt still possesses, he will imagine what that people must have been whose works only, of all ancient nations, have resisted the ravages of time : a people who seemed to labour for immortality, and among whom Orpheus, Homer, Herodotus, and Plato went to obtain that knowledge with which they enriched their native land. How will he regret that no efforts of the learned have hitherto removed the veil from the numerous hieroglyphics of these wealthy regions ; the intelligence of which characters would

would enlighten ancient history, and, perhaps, cast a luminous ray into the darkness of the first ages of the earth !

Become a citizen of the world, he will rise superior to partiality, and, while describing cities and countries, will give to truth the guidance of his pen. But let him shun the fault of many other travellers, and not make himself the principal figure in his picture, nor throw all the light on himself, and shade and obscure the other parts and persons : let him avoid affectation, either to shew his superior knowledge or add weight to his opinions. Such are the requisites he ought to possess who would travel to advantage ; and such the principles he should imbibe. To superior intelligence, and a spirit of observation, he must add that quick, deep, and penetrating sensibility which alone can make himself or others feel, effectually. Should he remain unmoved when he views the place where Pompey the great was assasinated ; should the wonders of Egypt not strike him with astonishment and admiration ; should he not weep over the august ruins of Alexandria, and the loss of 400,000 volumes, devoured by fire ; should

should not enthusiasm seize him, at beholding the ruins of Lacedæmon, Athens and Thebes; let him beware of writing: nature has not formed him to transmit those feelings, those sublime impressions, which objects so grand should inspire.

Such sensations, I imagine, I have had; but whether I have conveyed them with the force necessary to render my travels interesting the public must determine. If the reader accompanies me with pleasure, if the reality of my descriptions bring conviction, if the geographical and historical details instruct, if the memorable events I call to mind are apposite, and the parallel of ancient and modern manners be traced by judgment and reflection, I shall have obtained the height of my wishes, and all the fatigues, dangers, and labours I have undergone will be amply rewarded.

L E T T E R S
ON
E G Y P T.

L E T T E R I.

A general description of Egypt, and of the changes it has undergone from the most remote antiquity to the present time. Enquiries concerning the topography of the country, the labours of the Pharaohs to turn the channel of the Nile, and the original formation and gradual enlargement of the Delta.

To M. L. M.

Alexandria, July the 24th, 1777.

YOU complain, Sir, of my silence, and claim my promises. "Where," say you, "are those pictures of Oriental manners, which, knowing your inclination to observe, I was led to expect? What! have you been traversing Egypt these three years, and not written one

word concerning a country the most celebrated the earth contains?"

Such, Sir, are your reproaches. But be pleased to recollect the advice which you yourself gave me, when I left Paris, and in that you will find my justification. " You " are going, young man, into a foreign country, among a people who will be new to " you. Observe the influence of climate, " the power of religion, the imperious sway " of ancient customs, and the tyranny which " despotism exerts over suffering humanity; " in these you must find the history of their " vices and their virtues. To facilitate this " study learn the Eastern languages; live " among, and converse with, Greeks, Turks, " and Arabs; and, that you may see them " such as they are, leave your prejudices be- " hind you. Be it your endeavour to paint " the people you behold after Nature; let " the Turk resemble himself, and do not " give us a picture of Paris instead of Grand " Cairo."

Such were the precepts dictated by your wisdom; your judgement gave them weight, your friendship rendered them dear to me, and they have never been forgotten. Three years
of

of travel, pain, and labour, have been consecrated to my desire to put them in practice; had I written sooner, I had been less obedient.

It appears necessary, Sir, first to describe the limits of Egypt, and those revolutions which time and the labours of man have effected; the map, which accompanies this letter, will be of some assistance to you in acquiring the first of these. To the authorities of the ancients, the discoveries of Father Sicard, Po-cock, Niebuhr, and D'Anville, I have added my own observations. This last geographer, whose learned penetration could discover truth among the numerous contradictions of travellers, has often been of great service to me; nor do I ever quit him but in places which, he having never seen, it was impossible for him to avoid error.

Egypt is bounded on the north by the Mediterranean, by a chain of mountains, which separate it from Nubia, on the south; and on the east by the Red Sea, and the Isthmus of Suez; its western limits are the deserts of Lybia, in the midst of which stood the temple of Jupiter Ammon. Its greatest length is about two hundred and twenty-

five leagues, extending from Syene, which is situated under the tropic of Cancer, to Cape Burlos, which is the most projecting land of the Delta, and almost terminates the 32d degree of latitude.

Drawing a line from the ruins of Pelusium to the tower of the Arabs, formerly called Taposiris, we shall find its greatest width to be sixty-eight leagues; and this measurement agrees with that of the ancients, who computed fifty-four leagues, crossing the Delta from Pelusium to Canopus, and fourteen from Canopus to Taposiris. (a)

Egypt

(a) The base of the Delta, from Pelusium to Canopus, now called Alboukir, contained, according to Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, 1300 stadia, which we may estimate at 54 leagues; to which add 14 leagues from Canopus to the tower of the Arabs, and the amount will be 68 leagues. Herodotus reckoned 60 schoenas, that is to say 80 leagues, between Mount Casius and the bay of Plintina, where Taposiris stood. Mount Casius stands 12 leagues to the east of Pelusium; therefore subtract 12 from 80 and the remainder will still be 68 leagues from Pelusium to Taposiris. The two geographers, first mentioned, have evidently measured the same extent of country in a right line, and did not, like Herodotus, follow the base of the Delta; for, between the age of Herodotus and the time in which they lived, that part of Egypt

Egypt is divided into Upper and Lower ; the former is a long valley, beginning at Syene, and ending at Grand Cairo. Two ridges of mountains, which take their departure from the last cataract, form the lofty outlines of Upper Egypt : their parallel direction is from north to south, till they reach Grand Cairo, where, separating to the right and left, the one stretches towards mount Colzoum, and the other terminates in sand-banks, near Alexandria. The former consists of high rocks and cliffs, the latter of sandy hills, the base of which is a calcareous stone. Beyond these mountains are deserts, bounded by the Red Sea on the east, and extending over Africa to the west ; in the centre lies that long plain the greatest width of which does not exceed nine leagues. Here the Nile rolls his waters between two insurmountable barriers : now silent and tranquil, following the course which nature and art have traced ; and anon an impetuous torrent, red with the sands of Ethiopia, swelling, overflowing his banks,

Egypt had increased, by the immense quantity of sand which the course of the Nile carries with it ; and, had they followed the sea-shore, the admeasurement would have been considerably augmented.

and spreading his waters over the country for the space of two hundred leagues. In this celebrated valley, man first fought, and first beheld, the light of science, whose radiance, diffusing itself over Greece, (b) has successively enlightened the rest of the world. This valley, though still as fruitful as in the happy days of Thebes, is much less cultivated; its famous cities are laid level with the dust; laws and arts have been trodden under foot by despotism and ignorance, and their throne usurped.

Lower Egypt includes all the country lying between Grand Cairo, the Mediterranean, the Isthmus of Suez, and Lybia: skirted by arid sands, this immense plain, contains slips of land well cultivated, on the borders of the canals, and in its centre that triangular island to which the Greeks gave the name of Delta, formed by the two branches of

(b) Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, positively affirm the Greeks obtained most of their knowledge from Egypt. Thence it was that Orpheus and Homer brought mythology, and the daughters of Danaus the mysteries of Ceres. The Philosophers of Greece studied astronomy there, and their legislators the principles of government.

the

the Nile, which divide at *Batn el Bakara*, (the Cow's Belly) and empty themselves into the sea below Damietta and Rosetta. This island, the most fruitful on earth, has lost much of its extent, since the time when Canopus and Pelusium were its limits. (c) The eastern bulwark of Egypt having been destroyed by conquerors, and those who cultivated the earth becoming exposed to the inroads of the Arabs, the inhabitants have retired farther into the country. The canals, which with their streams brought fertility, are dried up: and the earth ceasing to be watered, and continually exposed to the burning heats of the sun, is become a barren sand. Scattered over the plains which formerly contained fruitful fields, and flourishing cities, (d) on the Pelusiac, Tanitic, and Mendesian arms, which all flowed from the Damietta branch of the Nile, we only find, at present, miserable hamlets, surrounded by date-trees, and deserts. These canals, formerly navigable, (e)

(c) Strabo, lib. 17.

(d) Bubaftus, Pelusium, Phacusa, and all the cities which stood in the eastern part of the Delta, are totally destroyed.

(e) The Pelusiac, Tanitic, and Mendesian branches were formerly navigable.

bear little resemblance to their former state, and no longer communicate with the lake Menzala, except a very little while during the time of the inundation; they are dry all the rest of the year. By digging them, and removing the mud which the river has left, since the Turks have been masters of Egypt, the country they traverse would become fertile, and the Delta restored to its ancient grandeur.

Having obtained a general idea of Egypt, please, Sir, to fix your attention on this rich country, and the changes it has undergone. Anterior to those times of which history preserves any certain record, a people descended from the mountains, which border on the cataract, into the valley the Nile inundates, (f) then an impracticable morass, overrun with reeds and bulrushes. After repeated, and often fatal trials, they discovered some salutary plants; among these were the lotus, (g) which Herodotus

(f) Herodotus, p. 40. Euterpe; Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. and Strabo, lib. 17. all ascertain the same fact.

(g) The lotus is an aquatic plant peculiar to Egypt, which grows in rivulets, and by the side of lakes; there are two species, the one bearing a white, the other a blue-

dotus calls the lily of the Nile; the reed we have named the sugar-cane, and which in this country has preserved its primitive appellation *cassab*, or reed; (b) the colocassium, (i) the onion, and the bean. Many years

a blueish flower. The calix of the lotus blows like that of a large tulip, diffusing a sweetnes like the smell of the lily. The root of the first species is round, resembling a potatoe; and is eaten by the inhabitants who live near the lake Menzala. The rivulets, near Damietta, are covered with this majestic flower, which rises about two feet above the water. Mr. Paw affirms it is no longer found in Egypt, and describes a plant no way resembling the lotus. *Recherches sur les Egyptiens & les Chinois*, page 150. No wonder this learned man was mistaken, since most of the travellers who have been in Egypt never saw the lotus, which does not grow on the great canals of the Nile, but among the inland rivulets.

(b) Some authors say the sugar-cane was brought from India to Egypt; perhaps, the method of cultivating it only was brought. It seems to me to be a native of a country which produces many species of reeds, and where it grows wild. Its very name induces this belief.

(i) The colocassium is a plant well known to botanists. It is particularly cultivated by the inhabitants of Damietta: vast fields overspread with its large leaves are seen near this city. Its root is in the form of a cone, and larger than that of the lotus, with a taste less insipid than the potatoe.

passed away before they thought of cultivating these native plants; but necessity begets industry. He to whom chance, or meditation, made any lucky discovery was a king, or a God. (k) Osiris taught men, who till then were cannibals, to feed on the fruits of the earth, instead of human flesh: Ifis, otherwise Ceres, instructed them in agriculture; and both were deified. The Egyptian Hercules, the most ancient of the heroes so named, freed the Thebais from the monsters by which it was ravaged, and had altars erected to him. While the people of Upper Egypt were contending with wild beasts for their vast marshes, (l) the sea, according to the ancients, washed the foot of the mountains where the pyramids now stand; advancing towards the tower of the Arabs far into Lybia; overflowing a part of the Isthmus of Suez, and forming an extensive bay, over the country we now call the Delta. But I shall pass these ages, and come to the times in which the Egyptians, sub-

(k) Diodorus Siculus, p. 24.

(l) Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus relate the opinion of the Ethiopians on this subject.

jected to religion and laws, dug canals, to give the stagnant waters of the Nile vent; raised high mounds, to oppose its ravages; and, weary of inhabiting rocky caverns, built cities, on hills thrown up by art, or nature. Boundaries were then prescribed to the river, and the habitations of men secured from its torrents. (m) Experience taught them to foresee the season of inundation; and geometry, measuring the lands which industry had thus acquired, ascertained individual property. A mighty city rose in the centre of the Thebais, which it was the glory of succeeding kings to embellish. Such was the magnificence of its public structures that now, when more than four thousand years have elapsed, its very ruins impress the mind with awe and admiration. Thebes flourished ages before Rome was. Divided from the rest of the world by deserts, mountains, and seas, the Egyptians cultivated arts and sciences in peace; and their unremitting labours daily extended the limits of their empire, either by raising banks, to secure their newly acquired lands, or by cutting deep drains

(m) Herodotus, p. 40. Euterpe.

through those which still were marshy. One of the kings of Egypt, probably foreseeing the consequences, undertook to turn the course of the river, (n) which, after meandering a hundred and fifty leagues between the mountains I have mentioned, came to an insurmountable obstacle, turned suddenly to the left, and, running south of Memphis, spread its waters over the sands of Lybia. This prince cut a new channel to the east of Memphis, raised a large mound, and obliged it to return between the mountains, and discharge itself into the bay that then bathed the rock on which the castle of Grand Cairo is built. The ancient bed of the river, and the mound which dammed up its en-

(n) The priests say that Menes, the first king of Egypt, built a bridge over the Nile, near Memphis; before which time the river, passing Mount Psammius, ran south of that city, and diffused itself over the Lybian deserts. Menes raised a mound a hundred stadia from Memphis, opposed its course, and forced it to return between the mountains; by which means its first bed became dry. At present, the Persians, who are masters of Egypt, repair this mound, which shuts up the ancient channel, at a great expence; having added new works yearly, and appointed troops, to watch and preserve it from injury. Herodotus, p. 55.

trance,

trance, were to be seen in the time of Herodotus. The Persians repaired the mound with great care; nor is the course of this ancient bed unknown even at present; it may be traced across the desert, passing west of the lakes of Natroun, by petrified wood, masts, and lateen yards, the wrecks of vessels, by which it was anciently navigated. The Arabs call this channel, which is now nearly filled up, *Bahr Bela Ma, (o)* a sea without water.

Egypt is indebted for the Delta to the labours of this monarch. The enormous weight of the waters of the Nile, discharging themselves into this gulph, repelled the sea; and the sand and mire they carried with them, in their course, accumulated. The Delta, very inconsiderable at first, rose from the sea, by encroaching on its limits: it was the gift of the river. Agriculture and man came to its defence, by raising mounds. In the time of Mœris, who lived five hundred years before the Trojan war, the Delta was in its infancy; (*p*) eight cubits were suffi-

(o) Great rivers are called by the Arabs *Bahr*, or sea.

(p) Herodotus, p. 41. Euterpe.

cient to overflow it entirely; they rowed over it in boats; and its towns, built on artificial mounts, resembled the islands of the *Ægean* sea. (q) In the age of Herodotus, fifteen cubits were necessary to overflow the Lower Egypt; but the Nile, at that time, inundated the country for the space of two days journey to the right and left of the Delta. Under the Roman empire, sixteen cubits produced similar effects; and when the Arabs governed, their writers speak of seventeen as the most favourable height. The standard of abundance, at present, is eighteen cubits; but Lower Egypt is no longer overflowed; the inundation goes no farther than Grand Cairo, and the neighbouring country. The Nile, however, often rises to two-and-twenty cubits. This phænomenon has been produced by an increase of mud, successively deposited, during so many ages. Art has likewise contributed towards it, either by raising the lands most exposed to the action of the river, by multiplying its outlets, or by cutting canals, which gave free course to the waters.

(q) *Strabo*, lib. 17, p. 1136.

(r). I have twice made the tour of the Delta, during the time of inundation, since I have been in Egypt, and have even crossed it by the canal of Menouf. The river, though full to the brim in the great branches of Rosetta and Damietta, and those which run through the interior parts of the country, only overflowed the land where it lay low, or where banks had been raised to stop its waters, and throw them over the rice fields. Thus, in the space of 3284 years, the Delta has risen fourteen cubits. (s) Yet we must not believe the conjectures of those travellers who suppose this island will become higher, and incapable of cultivation: being indebted, for its increase, to the mud which the course of the Nile

(r) Strabo, lib. 17. says the Bolbitine and Sebenitic channels of the Nile were both dug by the hand of man.

(s) To render this calculation exact, we ought to know whether the Greek, the Roman, and Arabian cubit were precisely the same, or what were the variations it has undergone, among these different people; which would be a thing very difficult to demonstrate. But this precision not being essential to my subject, I shall content myself with relating facts and the testimonies of authors.

carried with it, and annually deposited, when it ceases to be inundated, this effect must likewise cease." It has been demonstrated that culture is not sufficient to raise land.

The present position of the Delta is the best possible for agriculture. Washed on the east and west by two rivers, which the Nile, in dividing, forms, as wide and deeper than the Loire, intersected by innumerable rivulets, it is one immense garden, the beds and compartments of which may all be watered. The Thebais is under water three months of the year; mean while the Delta possesses fields covered with rice, barley, vegetables, and winter fruits: nor does it now, as formerly, resemble the *Ægean* sea, with her Cyciades. As far as the eye is capable of seeing, rich crops cover its plains, groves of date, orange, and sycamore-trees, streams, ever running, verdure, ever changing, and ever renewing, and abundance, which rejoices the heart and astonishes the imagination. Ceasing to be overflowed, this island has a yearly gain of the three months during which the Thebais is inundated, for which reason, it is the only part of Egypt where the same field yields

yields a double crop of grain ; the one of rice, the other of barley.

While it increased in height, you may well suppose, Sir, it augmented in length likewise ; to prove which, among various facts which history has preserved, I shall select only one.

(t) During the reign of Psammetichus, the Milesians, with thirty ships, landed at the mouth of the Bolbitine branch, at present the branch of Rosetta, where they fortified themselves, and built a city, which they called Metelis, now named Faoua, but which, in the Coptic vocabularies, is still called Mef-sil. This city, which was formerly a sea-port, stands, at present, nine leagues from the shore ; which space the Delta has lengthened from the age of Psammetichus to the present.

Homer, that sublime painter of nations and countries, whose geographic details are the most precious remains, of the kind, transmitted to us by all antiquity, makes Menelaus, becalmed on the Egyptian shore, speak thus. (u) " In the stormy sea that bathes the " coast of Egypt is an island named Pharos, " whose distance from the shore is as far as

(t) Strabo, lib. 17.

(u) Odyssey, book iv.

“ a vessel, impelled by a favourable wind,
“ may sail in one day.”—And, again, Proteus, prophesying to Menelaus, thus speaks.

(x) “ Destiny forbids that thou shouldest see
“ thy friends, thy palace, and thy native
“ land, till thou hast first returned to where
“ the Egyptus (y), Jove-born, rolls his wa-
“ ters, and there hast offered hecatombs to
“ the immortal gods.—He said, and the be-
“ best obliged me, with a broken heart, again
“ to traverse that vast and stormy sea which
“ separates the Pharos from the Egyptian
“ continent.”

Homer, who had travelled over Egypt (z), where he had learned that mythology, from the priests, of which he makes so beautiful use in his poems, describes the island of Pharos, which now forms part of Alexandria, as being twenty leagues distant from the shore of Egypt, at least; which opinion is accordant to that of the highest antiquity.

(x) *Odyssey*, book iv.

(y) The Nile was called Egyptus until the time of Nileus, one of the successors of Mendes, who, after many labours to confine and impede its ravages, named it after himself. *Diod. Sic. lib. i.*

(z) *Diodorus Siculus*.

What

What immense revolutions have great rivers occasioned on the surface of the globe ! How do they incessantly repel the sea, by accumulating sand on sand ! How do they raise up islands, at their mouths, which, in time, become part of the continent ! Thus has the Nile formed almost all the Lower Egypt ; and thus the Delta, which is ninety leagues in circumference, has risen from its waters ! Thus also has the Meander, incessantly driving back the waves of the Mediterranean, and by degrees filling up the bay in which it disembogues itself, cast the city of Miletus far within land, though it formerly was a famous sea-port ! Thus do the Tigris and Euphrates, descending from the Armenian mountains, sweep down the sands of Meopotamia, and imperceptibly choke up the Persian gulph.

You have now, Sir, a general idea of Egypt, and the principal changes which have happened there. I shall, therefore, proceed to be more circumstantial, and you will then perhaps think my narrative more interesting. Here, in the midst of Alexandria, fixed with astonishment at beholding monuments which neither the ravages of man nor time could yet destroy, weeping over the senseless remains

LETTERS

mains of columns and obelisks which adorned its public squares and temples, here will I write to you concerning the city of Alexander, the Alexandria of the Arabs, and the miserable huts to which the Turks presume to give that pompous title. Barbarians ! throughout their vast empire, they have stifled arts, sciences, cities, and kingdoms ; and the name only remains of all those famous works, which their ignorance has left to perish, or their intolerable fanaticism has destroyed !

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER II.

Alexandria, ancient, middle, and modern, with its monuments, and three bar sidescribed: its successive revolutions under the Ptolemies, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, and Ottomans.

To M. L. M.

Alexandria.

ALEXANDRIA, Sir, is well worthy your attention. The rank it once held among the most celebrated cities (*a*), the learned men to which it has given birth, and the remaining monuments which, though two thousand years have passed away, still attest its former glory, have a claim on your curiosity. To gratify this I have been three months examining the place where once it stood. By reading the Greek, Latin, and Arabic authors, I shall be enabled to dis-

(*a*) Diodorus Siculus, who wrote at Rome under Augustus, calls Alexandria the first city of the world. lib. 17.

cover it beneath its own rubbish; and, by comparing their writings with what I myself see, trace out its plan. Is it not a melancholy, a painful, task, to seek a once famous city within its own walls?

Asia Minor subdued, and the pride of Tyre humbled, Alexander marched for Egypt, then groaning under the Persian yoke; he conquered it without a battle; the people, desirous to free themselves from their fetters, received him, like a deliverer, with open arms. To preserve this conquest, so distant from his own kingdom, a fortress was necessary, which should contain a port capable of harbouring a powerful navy. Alexander bestowed on Egypt an advantage so precious; which till then it did not possess. The space which lay between Lake Mareotis and the excellent harbour formed by the isle of Pharos (*b*) he found proper for his purpose, and

(*b*) Homer, as I have already shown, describes the isle of Pharos as standing at the distance of a day's navigation from the shore of Egypt, because at that time the Lake Mareotis joined the sea, and formed a bay. During the five hundred years which elapsed between the time of Homer and the foundation of Alexandria, canals

and traced the limits of a great city, to which he gave his name; then visited the miracles of Upper Egypt, while the engineer Dinochares put his plan in execution. Alexander was gone almost a year, and, at his return, found Alexandria nearly finished. (c) He then peopled it with the inhabitants of the neighbouring cities, and pursued his conquests.

Alexandria was a league and a half in length, and one third as wide; so that its walls were about four leagues in circumference, (d)

canals had been cut over Lower Egypt; and the Lake Mareotis, into which the waters of the Thebais discharge themselves, withdrew so far, from the sea, as to form the slip of land on which Alexander built this city. When Cæsar, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus wrote, it bathed the walls. Under the Arabs, it retired half a league; and, beneath the destructive empire of the Ottomans, it has disappeared. A traveller who should at present visit Egypt, having read only Homer, would say with Madame Dacier, Pope, and many others of the learned, that his description of Pharos was merely the sport of the imagination.

(c) Quintus Curtius, lib. 4. cap. 8.

(d) Quintus Curtius says they were 80 stadia, or 3 leagues one third. Pliny, 15 Roman miles, or 5 leagues. Strabo, 76 stadia, or 3 leagues and an eighth. Diodorus Siculus, 96 stadia, or 4 leagues.

and were washed by the lake Mareotis on the south, and the Mediterranean on the north. The streets, lengthways, ran straight, and parallel to each other; thus giving a free passage to the north wind, which, alone, is healthy and temperate in Egypt. A street two thousand feet wide began at the marine gate, and ended at the gate of Canopus, adorned by magnificent houses, temples, and public edifices. Through this extent of prospect the eye was never satiated with admiring the marble, the porphyry, and the obelisks, which were destined hereafter to embellish Rome and Constantinople (*e*). This street, the finest the world ever saw, was crossed by another of equal width (*f*), thus forming a square, at the point of intersection, half a league in circumference, from the centre of which the two gates were seen, and vessels under sail, both to the north and south.

A mole was thrown up, from the continent to the island of Pharos, of a mile long,

(*e*) It is well known the obelisks which are at Rome were brought from Alexandria.

(*f*) Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, lib. 17.

which

(g) which divided the harbour. The part north of the mole preserved the name of the grand harbour, and a mound, carried from the island to the rock on which the Pharos stood, secured it from the west winds. The other harbour was called Eunostus, or the good return. At present, the first is called the New Port, the second the Old. There was a bridge of communication between the mole and the city, built on high columns, sunk in the sea, and leaving a free passage to vessels. The palace began far beyond the promontory Lochias, and extended as far as the mound, occupying more than a fourth of the city. (b) The Ptolemies all contributed to its magnificence; and within its walls were the museum, that asylum of the learned, groves, edifices, worthy royal majesty, and a temple where the body of Alexander, in a golden coffin, had been deposited. (i) The infamous Seleucus

Cybiosactes

(g) This mole was named *Hepta Stadium*, because it was seven stadia, or one mile long.

(b) Strabo, lib. 17, says it occupied a third.

(i) Perdiccas undertook to convey the body of Alexander to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, as he had commanded

Cybiosactes violated this tomb, carried off the golden coffin, and left one of glass in its stead. The island of Anti-Rhode stood in the grand harbour; it contained a theatre and a royal palace. In the harbour of Eunostus was another harbour, or dock, dug by the hand of man, named *Kibotos*, (k) which communicated with the lake Mareotis by a canal. Between this canal and the palace stood the admirable temple of Serapis; (l) that of Neptune was built near the grand square, where the market was kept. Alexandria extended itself still farther on the southern borders of the lake, and on its eastern side was the gymnasium, with porticos more than six hundred feet long, resting on several rows of marble columns. Without the gate of Canopus was a spacious circus, for chariot races; and, beyond, the suburb of Nicopolis spread along the sea shore, like another Alexandria. A superb amphitheatre was built here, with a stadium, commanded in his will; but Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, having carried it off, deposited it in the palace of Alexandria.

(k) *Kibotos*, The harbour of the Ark.

(l) Strabo, lib. 17.

for the celebration of the Quinquennalia. (m) Such is the description which the ancients, and particularly Strabo, have left us of Alexandria; a city built three hundred and thirty-three years before Christ, and successively subject to the Ptolemies, Romans, and the Greek Emperors. (n) About the middle of the sixth century, Amrou Ebn el Aas, the general of Omar, carried it by assault, after a fourteen months siege, which cost him twenty-three thousand men. Heraclius, Emperor of Constantinople, did not send a single vessel to its aid. There are few examples in history of a prince like this, who discovered activity in the first year of his reign, slumbered long afterwards in effeminate idleness, and, suddenly rousing at the fame of the conquests of Cosroes, the scourge of the East, put himself at the head of his armies, shewed himself a great commander the first campaign, ravaged Persia during

(m) Games celebrated once in five years.

(n) The tenth year of the Hegyra, and A. D. 651, was, according to Abulfeda, the year 994 after its foundation. Abulfeda uses the word Era, which, as I have said in the life of Mahomet, is derived from Arkha, which in Arabic is synonymous to epocha.

seven years, re-entered his capital loaded with laurels, then, turning theologian on the throne, lost his energy, and rest of his life in disputing on monothelism, while the Arabs deprived him of the finest provinces of his empire. Deaf to the cries of the wretched citizens of Alexandria, as he had been to those of Jerusalem, (o) who had defended themselves for two years, he suffered them to fall before the indefatigable and fortunate Amrou; their brave warriors all perishing sword in hand.

Astonished at his victory, the conqueror wrote to the Caliph—"I have taken the city of the west, the extent of which is immense, and its miracles too numerous for me to describe. It contains four thousand baths, twelve thousand venders of vegetables, four thousand Jews, who

(o) Omar led the force of Arabia against Jerusalem, which its inhabitants defended with admirable constancy, and several times sent to conjure Heraclius to grant them succour; but, their prayers being fruitless, they were obliged to yield after a two years siege, without having obtained a single soldier from the Emperor, who sacrificed his time and treasures to establish a new sect.

“ pay

“ pay tribute, four thousand comedians,
“ &c.” (p)

The library, in which the careful Ptolemyes had assembled more than four hundred thousand manuscripts, drew the victor’s attention, who wrote to the Caliph for orders. “ Burn them,” replied the ferocious Omar: “ if they contain only what is in the Koran they are useless; and dangerous if any thing more.” Barbarous sentence, which reduced to ashes the greatest part of the learned labours of antiquity! Of what knowledge, what arts, what immortal works, did not this fatal conflagration deprive the world! We ought, perhaps, to date that ignorance which spread a veil over countries that first gave birth to science from this fatal period. Let us but suppose three-fourths of the works Europe possesses suddenly annihilated, the art of printing unknown, and an illiterate people become masters of that fine quarter of the globe, and we can easily imagine it again fallen into that barbarism which it has been the labour

(p) Elmacin, Life of Omar, p. 30.

of

of so many ages to eradicate. Such was the fate of the East !

Thus subjected to the Arabs, Alexandria gradually declined : the distance of the caliphs of Bagdad prevented their affording any powerful support to commerce and arts, and population daily diminished ; thus, in the year 875, (q) the circumference of the city was reduced one half, the ancient walls were demolished, and those built which still remain. Their solidity, thickness, and the hundred towers by which they were flanked, have preserved them against the efforts of man, and the ravages of time. This may be called the Alexandria of the Arabs, which continued flourishing in the thirteenth century. (r) The equal intersection of its streets made it resemble a chequer ; part of its squares and public buildings were preserved ; its commerce extended from Spain

(q) This happened under the reign of Elmetouakkel, the tenth caliph of the Abassides, and the thirty-first from Mahomet. Elmacin. *Ebn Toulon*, then governor of Egypt, and who thought of rendering himself independent, built these walls.

(r) Abulfeda, Geographical Description of Egypt.
to

to India ; its canals were kept in repair, and its merchandize sent into Upper Egypt, by the lake Mareotis, and into the Delta, by the canal of Faoua. (s) The Pharos, built by Sostrates, of Cnidus, containing several stories, and surrounded by galleries supported by marble columns, still remained. This miraculous tower, as Cæsar calls it, was near four hundred feet high ; on its summit was a vast mirror of polished steel, (t) so disposed as to present the image of distant vessels before they were visible to the eye. This admirable tower served as a signal to shipping ; it was lighted up, during night, to inform mariners of their approach to the Egyptian coast, which is so low that there is great danger of running a-ground before it can be seen. Alexandria, in its decline, still preserved an air of grandeur, and magnificence, which excited admiration.

The Turks seized on Egypt in the fifteenth

(s) It was built under Ptolemy Philadelphus.

(t) Abulfeda speaks of this mirror, mentioned by several Arabian authors, in his description of Egypt, and says, it was destroyed by the arts of the Christians, under the reign of Oualid, son of Abd el Melec.

century, (u) and this put a period to its glory. At that time grammar, astronomy, geometry, and poetry, were cultivated there; but the iron rod of the Pachas soon drove away these remains of the fine arts; a prohibition to export the corn of the Thebais gave a mortal blow to agriculture; the canals dried up, commerce languished, and the Alexandria of the Arabs was so wholly depopulated that not a single inhabitant remained; the grand buildings they had abandoned fell to ruin, no one daring to repair them, under a government that made wealth a crime, and poor huts were built on the sea shore. The Pharos, which had been reckoned among the seven wonders of the world, was destroyed, and in its stead a square castle built, without taste or ornament, and incapable of sustaining the fire of a single vessel of the line. At present, in a space of two leagues, walled round, nothing is to be seen but marble columns, lying in

(u) Sultan Selim conquered Egypt in 1517, and the first act of this barbarous victor was to hang Thoman-bey, the last king of the Mamlukes, whose government had subsisted near 300 years, under the gate named Bab Zouila.

the dust, and sawed in pieces, for the Turks make mill-stones of them, or standing erect, firm and resistless by their enormous weight, together with the remains of pilasters, capitals, obelisks, and mountains of ruins, heaped on each other ! Who, at beholding such precious rubbish, and recollecting the famous monuments of which they were once a part, can, in the affliction of his soul, refrain from weeping over them ?

Modern Alexandria is a place of small extent, scarcely containing six thousand inhabitants, (x) but exceedingly commercial, which advantage it owes to its situation. It is built on the ground over which formerly the water of the grand harbour flowed, but which the retiring sea has now left dry. The mole, which was carried to the isle of Pharos, is now enlarged and become part of the continent ; and the island of Anti-Rhode is the centre of the new town ; it is known by an eminence, covered with ruins. The harbour of Kibotos is dry, and

(x) Ancient Alexandria contained 300,000 free inhabitants, in the time of Augustus ; a double number of slaves may at least be added, and the amount will be 900,000. How prodigious the difference.

the canal that ran into it, from the lake Mareotis, has disappeared ; the very lake itself, on the borders of which the papyrus and date-tree abounded, no longer exists ; the Turks having neglected to repair the canals, through which the waters of the Nile flowed into it. Belon, a very accurate observer, who travelled Egypt some years after the Ottoman conquest, affirms that, in his time, the lake Mareotis was but half a league distant from the walls of Alexandria, and that it was surrounded by forests of palm-trees. (y) The sands of Lybia are, now, where once these waters were ! To the destructive government of the Turks must we attribute these deplorable changes.

The canal of Faoua, the only one which still runs to Alexandria, and without which it could no longer be a town, since it has not a drop of soft water, is half filled up with mud, and sand. Under the government of the Romans, and even of the Arabs, it was navigable all the year, and fertilized the plains it traversed ; its banks were shaded by

(y) Belon, Description of Alexandria. This writer travelled in Egypt fifteen years after the conquest of Selim, about 250 years ago.

date-trees, covered by vines, and embellished by pleasure houses. (z) The stream only flows now about the end of August, and there is scarcely sufficient time to fill the reservoirs and cisterns of the town ; the lands, it once made fruitful, are now become de-

(z) The following passage of Abulfeda will confirm what I have said. " No prospect can be more agreeable than that of the canal of Alexandria : gardens, groves, and an eternal verdure, adorn its banks ; as Dafard el Hadad thus has described them, in these beautiful verses.

" How pleasant are the banks of the canal of Alexandria ! When the eye surveys them the heart is rejoiced ! The gliding boatman, beholding its bowers, beholds canopies ever verdant ; the lovely Aquilon breathes cooling freshness, while he sportful ripples up the surface of its waters ; the ample Date, whose flexible head reclines like a sleeping beauty, is crowned with pendent fruit."

Oua khalig Elescanderié ellati iatiha men el Nil men absan el mentezhat laenno daiak Makdar el janebin, bel Bi-satin oua fib iecoul el Hadad :

*Ou aphié ahadet l'ainak menzara
Ja efferour bo le calbak ou afda
Roud le mekbadder eladar oua gedaoual
Nakasbet aleih id eeh chermal mebareda
Oua-l-Nakhl Kelghid el haffan tezainet
Oua lebes men atmarhen calaïda.*

Abulfeda, Description of Egypt.

ferts, and the groves and gardens, around Alexandria, have disappeared, with the streams that watered them; a few trees only are seen without the walls, thinly scattered, of sycamore, fig, the fruit of which is delicious, dates, the caper shrub, and the souda, or kali, which spread a partial verdure over burning sands, the sight of which is insupportable.

Yet are not all tokens of the ancient magnificence of Alexandria effaced; its cisterns, vaulted with great art, which were built under all parts of the city, and its numerous aqueducts, are almost entire, though they have remained two thousand years. Towards the eastern part of the palace are the two obelisks, vulgarly called Cleopatra's needles, (a) of Thebaian stone, and containing numerous hieroglyphics: one is thrown down, broken, and covered with sand; the other still rests on its pedestal; each, cut from one single stone, is about sixty feet high, and se-

(a) Pocock supposes they stood before the Temple of Neptune, but this temple was built near the harbour of Eunostus, and the obelisks are half a league farther, towards the promontory Lochias; where, according to Strabo, the palace was built.

ven square, at the base. Near the gate of Rosetta are five marble columns, in the place where the porticos of the gymnasium stood; the remainder of the colonnade, the ranges of which, a hundred years ago, might be traced, (b) has been destroyed by the barbarism of the Turks.

A column of red granite, standing a quarter of a league from the south gate, particularly attracts the attention of travellers; the capital is Corinthian, with undented, smooth, palm-leaves; it is nine feet high; the shaft and the upper torus of the base are one single block of ninety feet long, and nine in diameter; the base is about fifteen feet square. This block of marble, sixty feet in circumference, rests on two layers of stone, held together by lead; which could not prevent the Arabs from forcing several of them out, in search of an imaginary treasure. The whole column is a hundred and fourteen feet high, and still preserves a perfect polish, except a little chipped toward the east. Nothing can equal its

(b) Maillet, Description of Egypt.

majesty ! At a distance, it is seen predominant over the city ; and, at sea, serves as a signal for mariners : near, it creates astonishment, mingled with awe : the spectator is never weary of admiring the beauty of the capital, the length of the shaft, or the grand simplicity of the pedestal ; and, I am persuaded, were this column transported and placed before the palace of our kings, all Europe would come and pay their tribute of admiration, as to the most magnificent monument on earth !

Travellers, and men of literature, have made many fruitless attempts to discover to what prince it was dedicated : the most intelligent have thought it could not be in honour of Pompey, since Strabo and Diodorus Siculus have not mentioned it ; they therefore remained in doubt, from which Abulfeda, in my opinion, might have relieved them. He calls it the column of Severus, (c) and history informs us this Emperor

(c) Oua escanderié ala shat bahr elroum, oua beha elmenarat el mashhoura, oua beha Aamoud Severi.

Alexandria is built on the sea shore, and possesses a famous Pharos, and the column of Severus. Abulfeda, Description of Egypt.

visited

visited Egypt, (*d*) appointed a court of justice in the city of Alexandria, and deserved well of its inhabitants. This column was a mark of their gratitude; the greek inscription, half effaced, but visible on the western side, when the sun shines on it, was no doubt legible in the time of Abulfe-da, and contained the name of Severus. Neither is this the sole monument erected to him, by the gratitude of the people of Alexandria; in the midst of the ruins of Antinoe, built by Adrian, is a magnificent column, the inscription on which still subsists, dedicated to Alexander Severus. Half a league south of the city is the descent into the catacombs, the ancient asylum of the dead. Winding alleys lead to the subterranean caverns where they were deposited. The suburb of Necropolis (*e*) extended thus far.

(*d*) The Emperor Severus came to the city of Alexandria, and granted the people a senate, which, till then, had been under the authority of a single Róman magistrate, having no national council, but, as in the time of the Ptolemies, the will of the prince was then law. The benefactions of Severus did not end here, for he changed several laws in their favour. *Spartianus Vita Severi, cap. 17.*

(*e*) The city of the dead where there are gardens, temples, and stately mausoleums.

Advancing toward the sea, we come to a large basin, hewn in the rock which stands on the shore; two handsome apartments have been cut in the sides of the basin, with banks crossing them; into these the sea water runs, as clear and transparent as crystal, through a canal, dug with angular turnings to retain the sand; and here I bathed. When seated on the rocky bank, the water rises somewhat above the middle; the feet rest on a soft fine sand; the waves are heard, roaring against the rock, and foaming through the canal; they enter, raise you up, retire, and, thus passing and repassing, bring, with water continually fresh, a coolness most delicious, under a sky so sultry. This is vulgarly called Cleopatra's bath, and there are ruins which denote it was formerly embellished.

I must not quit Alexandria, Sir, without bringing some of those memorable things to recollection which have happened in this city. Imagine you behold yonder mount, near which Cæsar, firing the arsenal of the Alexandrians, consumed a part of the Ptolemaean library. At the entrance of this port, repulsed by his enemies, he threw himself, armed, into the waves; and, ever master of himself,

self, foreseeing the numbers of the flying would presently sink his ship, swam to one more distant : his presence of mind saved him, for his vessel and all on board were swallowed up. Yonder Cleopatra, famous for her beauty, her talents, and arts, ensnared the hero, awhile restrained his ever restless ambition, and, lulling him in the bosom of voluptuousness, led him in her train, up the Nile, at the very moment he ought to have set sail for Rome, the gates of which were in danger of being for ever shut upon him. Beside these columns, melancholy mementos of the gymnasium, the haughty queen of Egypt, seated on a throne of gold, received, in presence of the wondering world, the title of wife to Antony, who there sacrificed fame to love. Lost in pleasures, having suffered the moment of conquest to escape, she caused herself to be bit by an aspic, he fell upon his sword ; and thus, in death, afforded a memorable example to posterity.

Where yonder rubbish lies the museum stood, once the asylum of sciences. Appian, Herodian, Euclid, Origen, Philo, and a multitude of other learned men, cultivated them there. Ignorance and barbarism have now overwhelmed

overwhelmed the country of the fine arts, which nothing but some prodigious revolution can ever restore.

This is a long letter, Sir; I shall therefore forbear to add observations on the manners and trade of the people of Alexandria: these will find a place hereafter, and I hasten to quit a city where one exists in the midst of ruins, where every object inspires grief, where the inhabitants are a mixture of Moors and Turks whose crimes have expelled them from their country, where the Bedouin Arabs come and rob you in open day, and where, in fine, nature, dead eleven months of the year, decks herself in a momentary verdure only to inspire lasting regret!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R III.

The route from Alexandria to Rosetta, across the desert ; with the description of Albou-kir, formerly Canopus ; the famous temple of Serapis ; the festivals held there ; the dangers of the desert, and the delightful environs of Rosetta.

To M. L. M.

Rosetta.

TRAVELLERS, Sir, who go from Alexandria to Rosetta by land, leave the canal of Faoua on the right, pass near the ruins of the grand circus, and, on the left, meet with the remains of Nicopolis, a suburb which was embellished by Augustus, after his victory over Antony. Here, for the space of two leagues, nothing is to be seen but heaps of rubbish, burying the precious remains of antiquity. Coasting, afterwards, beside the sea, the prospect extends on one hand over waves, and on the other over sandy fields, of melancholy and arid uniformity, which

which is here and there interrupted by date-trees. The Bedouin Arabs bring their flocks to feed here, during winter, and, in summer, gather souda (*f*) in heaps, burn it, and sell the ashes to the inhabitants of Alexandria, who export it into Syria, and the isle of Crete, where it is used in making soap. These wandering Arabs, on the first tidings of a revolution in Egypt, mount their horses, infest the high roads, and plunder travellers. Six leagues from Alexandria is the *Madia*, (*g*) where there is a ferry, at the farther end of the canal of Canopus, which, taking its departure from Faoua, falls into the lake Behera. This lake is seven leagues in circumference, and empties itself into the sea, near Alboukir, (*h*) which small town is the ancient Canopus. Its distance, six leagues from Pharos, and its situation, on the sea shore, perfectly agree with the description the ancients have given us of Canopus. Pliny, who had collected the authorities of

(*f*) *Kali*, *souda*, or *glas* wort, is a creeping plant which grows in the sands.

(*g*) *Madia*, in Arabic, signifies the passage over a lake, or river.

(*h*) This place is called *Bekier*, by mariners.

antiquity,

antiquity, says, it was formerly an island, which the aspect of the place makes credible; the land lies so low, in the neighbourhood, that the sea covered it, in part, in Strabo's time. (i) The city, built on a rock, which forms an excellent road for shipping, was secure from inundation.

Canopus was named after the pilot of Menelaus, who died there; (k) his tomb was to be seen in the age when S. Epiphanius wrote. The pleasantness of its situation, its temple of Serapis, and the cunning of its priests, rendered it one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in Egypt; multitudes came there from the most distant provinces, and especially from Alexandria. Licentiousness reigned, during these festivals, and pleasure, more than religion, led the pretended worshippers of their God thither. The priests were not less eminent as physicians than as interpreters of the oracle: skilful in restoring their exhausted patients by perfumed baths,

(i) Strabo, lib. 17.

(k) Strabo, lib. 17. Diodorus Siculus, S. Epiphanius, lib. 4. cap. 3. These authors confirm the opinion of Homer, who makes Menelaus land in Egypt. Odyssey, lib. 4.

in renovating an injured stomach by nutritive and succulent food mingled with spices, and in heating their imaginations by voluptuous pictures, they succeeded in reanimating the half lost senses. Their cures, all attributed to Serapis, were registered, and this dazzled the people and encreased their celebrity. Never had Divinity more adorers ; never had priests more offerings. (1) Strabo affirms, the canal, between Alexandria and Canopus, was loaded, night and

(1) Canopus contains a temple, dedicated to Serapis, where distinct adoration is paid to this God, in whom the very best people have faith.—Some of the priests are employed in writing the miraculous cures, performed there ; others the oracles, which are there pronounced ; but the thing most astonishing is to see the prodigious concourse of people, who come, from all parts, to the feasts of Serapis, down the canal of Alexandria, which is, day and night, covered with boats, full of men and women, who sing and dance with extreme licentiousness. Strabo, lib. 17.

These pilgrimages which existed in the time of Herodotus are still continued ; the Pagans went to the temple of Serapis, the Turks go to the tombs of their saints, and the Copts to the churches of their saints ; all abandon themselves to mirth, nor has Turkish gravity abolished the wanton songs and dances which seem to have originated with the Egyptians.

day,

day, with boats, containing pilgrims whose songs and dances seemed inspired by libidinous disorder, and frantic joy. This canal is at present dry, during one part of the year; and the ruinous town consists only of huts, and a castle, provided with a few pieces of artillery, to defend the road.

Passing the ferry, Madia, we come to a caravansary, the sole asylum, against these burning heats, to be met with during a journey of fourteen leagues. Beyond lies an extensive, barren, plain, where neither verdure, tree, nor shrub, are seen; the eyes are half blinded, by a torrent of light; the skin parched by the fiery sun. Eleven columns, erected at proper intervals, direct the traveller across the desert, where the wind agitates the sand hills till they resemble the waves of the sea. Woe be to the man who, in the midst of this desert, is overtaken by the noon day whirlwind! If he has not a tent to shelter himself, he is overwhelmed in drifts of burning dust; which, filling his eyes and mouth, deprive him of breath and life. The wisest way is to make this journey by night; and then, at break of day, the traveller discovers the palm and sycamore-

sycamore-trees (*m*) which adorn the banks of the Nile, and presently arrives at Rosetta, bathed in sweat and dew.

When, after a long abode in the centre of ruins, and a most fatiguing journey, one finds one's self in the midst of a pleasant city, surrounded with groves and verdure, how does the soul dilate! How is it disposed to enjoy all the beauties of nature! Such is the traveller who, quitting Alexandria, comes to inhabit Rosetta: escaped all the horrors of the desert, he thinks himself transported into another Eden, where every object is the symbol of abundance.

Rosetta, called Raschid by the Arabs, stands on the ancient Bolbitine branch, to which it has given its name. It was founded in the eighth century; (*n*) the increasing sand

(*m*) The Egyptian sycamore produces a fig, which grows on the trunk of the tree, and not at the end of the branches, and which, though somewhat dry, is eaten. This tree becomes exceedingly large, and tufted; it seldom grows straight, but is generally bent, and twisted; its branches extending very far, horizontally, afford excellent shelter; its leaves are divided, and its wood, impregnated with bitter juice, is not subject to be worm-eaten. The sycamore grows several ages.

(*n*) Neither Father Sicard, Pocock, Nieburgh, nor any other traveller have fixed the time of the foundation

sand banks of the Nile no longer permitting ships to sail as far as Faoua, this new city was built at, though now two leagues distant from, the mouth of the river. Abulfeda informs us it was an inconsiderable place in the thirteenth century, (o) nor had it greatly increased two hundred years afterwards; but, when the Ottomans added Egypt to their conquests, they neglected to repair the canals; and, that of Faoua ceasing to be navigable, Rosetta became the store-house of the merchandize of Alexandria and Cairo. Trade soon made it flourish, and it is now one of the pleasantest towns in Egypt. It spreads along the western bank of the Nile, and is nearly a league in length, and one

of Rosetta. Elmacin, p. 152, informs us it was built during the reign of Elmetouakkel, Caliph of Bagdad, about the year 870, and under the pontificate of Cosmar, patriarch of the Jacobines at Alexandria. M. Maillet allows it to have been built only a hundred years, and thinks it replaces Canopus. This is an error. Prosper Alpinus has committed the same fault.*

(o) *Raschid balidé ala garbi el Nil el garbi and mesabib fil bahr.* Rosetta is a small city, built on the western bank of the western branch of the Nile, near its mouth.

Belon, who travelled in Egypt in 1530, says Rosetta was smaller than Faoua: at present it is one half larger than that city.

fourth as wide. No remarkable square is seen here; no street perfectly straight; but the houses, built with terraces, standing asunder, and kept in good repair, have a pleasing air of neatness and elegance. Within, they contain vast apartments, where the air has free circulation through a great number of windows, kept always open: the lattices and transparent blinds break the sun's rays, and thus render the light mild, and temper the excess of the heat. The only remarkable public edifices are the mosques, the lofty minarets of which are built in a light, bold, stile, and produce a picturesque effect, in a town where the roofs are all flat, by throwing variety into the picture. Most of the houses have a prospect of the Nile and the Delta; a truly magnificent one! Vessels and boats, some rowing, some under sail, continually cover the river; while the tumult of the port, the mirth of the mariners, and their noisy music, present a scene ever moving, ever alive. The Delta, that immense garden, where the exhaustless earth is never weary of producing, affords an eternal view of harvests, vegetables, flowers, and fruits, in succession; the abundant variety

variety of which, at once, gladdens the eyes and the heart. Various species of cucumbers, delicious melons, the fig, the orange, the banana, the pomegranate, all grow here, all have here an exquisite flavour. Yet how much might culture increase their excellence, did the Egyptians understand engrafting.

North of the city are gardens, where citron, orange, date, and sycamore-trees are promiscuously planted; though this disorder is negligent, the mingling of the trees, and the arbours they form, impenetrable to the sun's rays, together with the flowers scattered among them, render these groves most enchanting.

When the atmosphere is all on fire, when the big moisture courses down every member, when gasping man pants after cool air, as the sick after health, with what ecstasy does he go and respire under these bowers, and beside the rivulet by which they are watered! There the Turk, with his long jasmin pipe wrought with amber, imagines himself transported into the garden of delight which Mahomet promised: thoughtless, in tranquil apathy, he smokes the sun down, void of desire, void of ambition; his calm passions never cast one curious look towards futurity:

that restless activity by which we are tormented, and which is the soul of all our knowledge, of all our works, is to him unknown ; content with what he possesses, he neither invents nor brings the inventions of others to perfection : his life, to us, seems a long slumber ; ours, to him, one continual state of intoxication ; but, while we are ever pursuing happiness which ever eludes our grasp, he peaceably enjoys the good that nature gives, and each day brings, without troubling himself concerning the morrow.

Here, in these gardens, the young Georgians, sold into slavery by barbarous parents, quit, with the veil which covers them, that decency they observe in public. Freed here from all constraint, they cause lascivious dances to be performed in their presence, sing tender songs, and relate tales, and romances, which present an undisguised picture of their manners, and pleasures. Born in a temperate climate, they receive from nature a soul of energy, and tumultuous passions ; brought afterwards into Egypt, the fire of the atmosphere, the perfume of the orange flower, and the emanations of aromatic plants, voluptuously invade every sense : then does one

one sole care employ, one sole desire torment, them ; one only predominant want is felt ; the violence of which is encreased by the restraint under which they are kept.

The principal wealth of Rosetta flows from commerce. The transportation of foreign merchandize to Cairo, and of the productions of Egypt to the port of Alexandria, gives employment to a great number of mariners, their vessels are called scherms ; (*p*) a light kind of boats, with lateen-sails, and which, having no deck, are very hazardous ; a gust of wind, coming unexpectedly, turns them on their side, and they founder. The *Bogaz*, (*q*) for so they call the bar at the mouth of the Nile, is a dangerous shoal for them ; the waters here drive and struggle to find passage into the sea, and, when the wind freshens, the waves run mountain-high, forming whirlpools, which engulf vessels. The Bogaz is shallow, and, in the extent of a league, there is seldom more than

(*p*) Scherm, expresses the swiftness with which these small vessels skim the waves ; the sailors of Provence call them, by corruption, germe.

(*q*) The word, Bogaz, is descriptive of the agitation of the waves.

a passage of some few fathoms for the vessels, which is continually changing: a boatman, or pilot, keeps sounding, night and day, to direct the mariners what course they must steer, who often are incapable, with all their art, to cope with the winds and waves; they miss the passage, get on a sand bank, and, in a few minutes, all is swallowed up in a vortex of water and mud. Numerous shipwrecks happen every year; there have been several since I have been here. A large boat, richly laden, perished yesterday, on the bogaz; the passengers leapt into the water; an old and feeble man clung to the mast, and disappeared with it; three young girls, after long struggling with the waves and current, were swallowed up; two robust sailors got ashore; a woman of thirty, who had tied a child she suckled round her with her fash, swam vigorously; the desire of saving her infant gave her fortitude; yet, after an hour's contention, against the violence of the sea, this affectionate mother was on the point of perishing, the victim of maternal love; the boatmen, however, perceived her, plunged into the Nile and hastened to her assistance; spent with fatigue, she scarcely could

could keep herself above water ; but they swam beside, supported, and happily brought her on shore. These melancholy scenes are frequently renewed.

The bar of the Nile is totally closed, two months in the year, and the commerce of Alexandria interrupted ; but, were it to become totally impassable, and were all the shipping of Egypt to be swallowed up, the Ottoman government would not remove one foot of earth from the canal of Faoua, to render it navigable. Committed to their care, every thing perishes, nothing is repaired.

I have many more things, Sir, to tell you concerning Rosetta ; but, as I shall prolong my stay in this city, I shall wait till observation, and the society of its inhabitants, shall have still better enabled me to execute my task.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER IV.

Further remarks on Rosetta, its foundation, commerce, inhabitants, and gardens; with an account of the procession of the Psylli, or serpent-eaters.

To M. L. M.

Rosetta.

ROSETTA, Sir, may well excite the curiosity of a European, who sees so many new objects that he imagines himself transported into another world: men and nature, all he beholds is changed. A dead silence reigns throughout the city, uninterrupted by the noise of carriage; camels are the carriers here; nothing alters or disturbs the grave walk of the inhabitants: their long garments float down to their heels; the head is loaded with a heavy turban, or encircled by a shawl; (r) they cut their hair off, and let their beards grow. Sashes are common to both sexes; the citizen is armed

(r) They wind the shawl, sometimes made of silk, and sometimes of wool, in a long piece, round the head. with

with a knife, the soldier with a sabre, and two pistols. The women of low rank, whose clothing consists of an ample blue shift, and long drawers, cover their faces with a bit of cloth, having holes opposite the eyes; the rich wear a large white veil, with a black silk mantle, enveloping the body like a domino, so that one would think them in masquerade. A stranger scarcely dares look at them, to speak would be a crime; but these masks are liberal of their signs, and oglings; and, as this is the only language they are permitted to use in public, it is more expressive, more copious, and in much higher perfection than in Europe: every thing is said, every thing is wonderfully well understood, without opening the lips.

The country is as different from the neighbourhood of Paris as is Rosetta from a town in France. An immense flat, without hill or mountain, intersected by innumerable canals; corn fields; branching sycamores, whose unperishable wood preserves the mud-wall hut into which the husbandman retires during winter, for he sleeps under the shade in summer; date-trees in clusters, or scattered over the plain, the profuse

fusc fruit of which is nutritive, sweet, and salutary ; the cassia, with flexible branches, decked in yellow flowers, and bearing a pod well known in Pharmacy ; (s) orange, and citron-trees unmutilated by the pruning knife, whose projecting odoriferous boughs form arbours impenetrable by the sun's rays ; such, Sir, are the objects of the Delta, and such its principal trees and shrubs. Winter does not rob them of their foliage, they are apparelled all the year as if every month were May.

The land is a black soil, the fertility of which seems inexhaustible ; ever productive and never fallow. The husbandmen have been preparing the rice grounds. Oxen, blindfolded, turn a machine, with buckets which empty water into a basin, whence it is diffused over the fields, where it is left to remain a week : when the earth is thoroughly soaked, men, women, and children, naked up to the waste, walk and sink

(s) This pod resembles a long, small, cucumber, and contains the cassia used in Pharmacy ; the cassia of Egypt is much preferable to that of America, but, being dearer, is neglected by the druggists. The Egyptians use the cassia flower as a laxative.

deep

deep into the mud, and easily free the land from the old roots. This work done, rice of a foot high is transplanted into the rice bed, (*t*) where, watered every day, its rapid growth is astonishing. The grounds, on the banks of the Nile, and the canals, are planted about the end of July, and reaped in November; the sheaves are spread on the floor; a kind of low cart, with cutting wheels, drawn by two oxen, is driven, by a man seated on it, over the rice, and the straw is separated from the grain, which is afterwards winnowed; it is next carried to granaries, where there is a mill that frees it from the husk; and, thus prepared, it is mixed with salt, and enclosed in *Couffes*, (*u*) made from the leaves of the date-tree.

The rice grown round Rosetta is known by the name *Sultani*, and it is a mistake to suppose this rice is ever sent to Marseilles; being appropriated to the use and consumption of Constantinople, there are very rigorous laws which prohibit its exportation. The

(*t*) The word rice comes from the Arabic *rauz*.

(*u*) The word *couffe* is Arabic, and signifies the oval panniers, made of date-tree leaves, in which the rice is enclosed.

merchants of Provence take in their cargoes at Damietta.

As soon as the rice is down, the stubble is torn up, the land slightly dressed, and barley is sown, which presently ripens. Those who prefer a crop of hay inundate the field, and sow it with lucerne, (x) which grows so fast that, in twenty days, it is a foot and a half high, and so thick that its surface appears one solid verdure. It is three times cut before the season of transplanting the rice ; thus, the same field will either yield two crops, of grain, one of rice, the other of barley, or four, one of rice and three of hay. This fecundity is, however, peculiar to the Delta ; where the land, lying lower than in the Thebais, may be watered all the year, by means of the canals and machines above-mentioned.

Rosetta has a manufactory of cloth : the flax of the country, long, flexible, and silky, would make exceedingly fine linen, did they know how to work it ; but the spinners are very inexpert ; their thread is coarse, hard, and unequal. The cloth bleached in the

(x) The Arabs call it *Barsim*, it is the only hay known in Egypt.

dew is for table linen ; the rest, dyed blue, clothes the common people.

One of my walks, round Rosetta, was to see the castle built by the Mamluks, to defend the passage of the river. This is a square building, flanked with four towers, containing artillery ; and stands a league north of the town, on the western bank of the Nile. Fronting it is a platform furnished with cannon ; and these two forts, inconsiderable as they are, would be sufficient to impede the entrance of ships, if the Turks understood gunnery. Here however they are safe ; Nature has been careful to defend the mouth of the Nile, by throwing up a dangerous bar, the terror of mariners ; it would even be impossible for gun-boats to pass it, did not the boatmen of the bogaz serve them as pilots.

South of the city, on the bank of the Nile, is a small eminence, in the midst of which, an antique tower, half buried, raises its head. A large semicircular basin, beneath, indicates a harbour, at present filled up. Some years ago, a Turkish merchant, by causing part of the rubbish to be removed, found twenty beautiful marble columns : this was to him an unfortunate discovery. The Beys, thinking

thinking he had carried off concealed treasures, pillaged him of his wealth. None of the learned, who have visited Egypt, have endeavoured to discover what city could have been built here. (y) M. D'Anville suspects the ancient Bolbitinum might have stood not far from the place where Rosetta is built ; and he was not deceived, for the ruins I describe are near this city, and can only appertain to Bolbitinum, mentioned by Stephanus Byzantinus; which town gave its name to one of the mouths of the Nile.

This is a most picturesque place ; the ruinous tower is surrounded by tombs ; on the west is a desert plain, over the burning extent of which one cannot glance without shuddering ; the flooding light, reflected from the sands, pains the sight, and the picture of sterility fills the mind with melancholy. But turn to the east and how wonderful the con-

(y) Neither Niebuhr, Shaw, Pococke, nor Father Sicard, mention it. Maillet, who was an exact observer, remarks there had been an ancient city in this place, which, he supposed, might have been Canopus ; but the site of Canopus is so perfectly described, by Strabo, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, &c. that there can be no doubt it stood where Alboukir now stands.

transcript !

trast! How charming the view! Here the majestic river is covered with boats, and the Delta with all the graces of spring, the beauties of summer, and the profuse richness of autumn; as far as the eye can see are verdure, fruits, and corn fields. Is not this the picture of that Eden where the Creator placed the first of mortals?

You are acquainted with the Psylli, those celebrated serpent-eaters of antiquity, who sported with the bite of vipers and the credulity of the people. Many of them inhabited Cyrene, a city west of Alexandria, and formerly dependent on Egypt. You know the pitiful vanity of Octavius, who wished the captive Cleopatra should grace his triumphal car; and, chagrined to see that proud woman escape by death, commanded one of the Psylli to suck the wound, the aspic had made. Fruitless were his efforts; the poison had pervaded the whole mass of blood, nor could the art of the Psylli restore her to life. Would you suppose, Sir, these serpent-eaters still exist? I myself am a witness they do, as you shall hear.

The festival of *Sidi Ibrahim* (z) was last week held at Rosetta, and drew a vast concourse of people. A Turk permitted me to see the procession from his house, where, seated at the window, I observed this novel sight with attention. The different trades gravely marched in files, each preceded by its banner ; the standard of Mahomet borne in triumph followed, and attracted a prodigious crowd ; all were desirous to touch, kiss, or put it to their eyes, and those who obtained this favour, returned satisfied ; the tumult was renewed incessantly. After this came the Cheiks, priests of the country, wearing leather-caps in the form of a mitre, and singing, as they slowly walked, the hymns of the Koran. A few paces behind them I perceived a company of men, apparently frantic, with naked arms, wild eyes, and enormous serpents in their hands, which twined round their bodies, and endeavoured to escape.

(z) *Our Lord Abraham.* The Arabs, being descendants of Abraham, from Ishmael, hold him in great veneration, and keep an annual festival in his honour.

These

These Psylli, (a) seizing them forcibly by the neck, avoided their bite, and, regardless of their hisses, tore them with their teeth and eat them alive, while the blood streamed from their defiled mouths ; other Psylli struggled with them, to force away their prey ; the contention was who should devour a living serpent.

The astonished populace followed, and cried—A miracle ! They supposed these people inspired, and possessed by a spirit, which destroyed the effects of the bite of serpents. The description I have sent you is exact ; the sight first terrified me, and afterwards led me to reflect on man, that strange creature, to whom poison becomes food ; that credulous being, who, blinded by his ignorance, cannot detect a fraud which is annually practised, but is prompted to worship one of his own species, who has art sufficient to deceive him. You perceive, Sir,

(a) The Psylli, men of Cyrene, possessed a secret against the poison of serpents. Strabo, lib. 17.

Perhaps, by feeding on their flesh, they destroyed the effect of their bite.

ancient usages are not lost, in a country where that tyrant, custom, has particularly erected his altars and his throne.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER V.

Voyage from Rosetta to Boulac. Observations on the manner of navigating the Nile, on the canals cut from it, the towns, villages and hamlets, built on their banks, the productions and cultivation of the country, and the customs of the inhabitants.

To M. L. M.

Rosetta, Oct. 1st, 1777.

AND now, Sir, be pleased to imagine me on board a *mach*, that is to say a large two masted boat with an agreeable cabin, and a smaller one hung with mats curiously worked. A tent on the deck shades me from the sun's heat, and, thus seated, from this charming prospect will I endeavour to trace objects as they rise to view. It is now one o'clock, the anchor is weighed, the sail swells and the north wind, which blows without intermission at this season of the year, with ease carries us against the current: briskly we cut the waves which whiten on the prow

of our small vessel. The high minarets of Rosetta diminish, and every moment new and delightful views fix our attention. The shores of the Nile abound in reeds, the plains with corn; the rice is maturing for the sickle, and the wind, agitating its pliant surface, makes it resemble the waving motion of the sea; the husbandman, whose care it is to water the harvest, opens the sluices, or closes the dams at pleasure; the ox turns the noisy creaking wheel which raises the waters; distant cots and hamlets rise, and now and then a few houses of bricks, sun-dried; and now we behold a small mosque, with its minaret by turns concealed and seen among the tall trees, surrounded by the orange, the palm, and sycamore, every object seems to spring from the bosom of profusion and verdure! We have already past various villages, and an island, on the banks of which water melons grow; of these we have made ample provision, for it is impossible to be satiated with them. Nurtured in a rich soil and ripened by a penetrating sun, here, amid these heats, their melting sweetness is most delicious; and, what increases their value, most healthy; they may be eaten to excess, without

without danger or inconvenience. The island where we obtained them lies between the villages *Berimbal* and *Meballet el Emir*.

Yonder we perceive a branching canal, which, quitting the Nile, goes probably and discharges its waters in the lake *Bebira*, through which there is a passage to Canopus; and now we arrive at *Deyrout*, a charming village on the western bank of the Nile.—The sun declines, and his departing rays gild the towering minarets of Faoüa, of which we have a twilight glimpse; we shall remain all night within sight of this city.

From on board, Oct. 2d.

Faoüa is fallen from its ancient greatness; in the time of Belon (*b*) it was second only to Grand Cairo. The Venetians kept a Consul there, and merchandise was brought thither up the canal that leads to Alexandria; but, this being no longer navigable, Rosetta

(*b*) We have before said Belon visited Egypt in the fifteenth century, about fifteen years after the Ottoman conquest. This naturalist traversed the greatest part of the East, and imported various exotics into France. To him we are indebted for the evergreen oak, which, in the depth of winter, preserves a faint image of spring.

is now become flourishing, and Faoüa has lost, with its commerce, the source of its splendor. I have taken a hasty survey of it, attended by the Janiffary who accompanies me. Large ruinous buildings ; squares, loaded with rubbish ; brick houses, out of repair, many mosques, deprived of all ornament ; but few inhabitants, and those poor ; such are the melancholy remains of this celebrated city of the Milesians. (c) Built in the neighbourhood of Canopus, and somewhat infected by the same immorality, the inhabitants permit prostitutes to live in a public Kan, and wink at their disorders. They intercept passengers, before whom they sing and dance, after the manner of their country : nothing can be more licentious than their songs, or more lascivious than their looks and gestures. In the neighbourhood of this city stood Naucratis, which also was founded by the Milesians.

From on board, Oct. 3d.

The ever favourable north wind has fore-run the dawn, and the mariners have unfurled their sails ; and now with ease we cut the

(c) I observed, in my first letter, that it was the Milesians who built the city at present called Faoüa.

rapid

rapid current, have already past several islands, almost under water ; and hamlets of which we caught an occasional glance, amidst the luxuriant verdure ; already we are five miles from Faoüa, opposite the mouth of the canal dug by Alexander, and which the negligence of the Turks has suffered to be in part filled up. Four leagues down its stream stands the little town of *Damanhour*, inhabited by Copts and Mahometans, which is the *Hermopolis Parva* described by Ptolomy, Strabo places it beside the river, but we must understand by this the canal of Alexandria. Abulfeda has precisely marked its scite. (d) The neighbouring lands produce much flax, wheat, barley and cotton, which is an annual plant.

As we advance we see multitudes of boats, some gliding with, and others ploughing against the stream ; we hear the rude and

(d) *Damanhour* is a town of Egypt to the South-east of Alexandria, near the canal which runs thither ; it is the capital of *Behira*, and is called *Damanhour* of the desert. (*) Oua men balad masr Damanhour. Oua hie fi-l-shark, oua-l-genoub en Elescanderié. Oua hie caadat elbehire. Oua leha Kalig Elescanderié. Oua taaref Damanhour el ouaehesh. Abulfeda Description of Egypt.

(*) So called to distinguish it from two towns of the same name, it being not far from the desert in which are the lakes of Natroun.

noisy music of the mariners, who mingle their hoarse voices with the tambour de basque and the artless reed flute. These concerts charm not the ear, yet do they inspire the heart with gladness. And now herds of oxen low in the meadows; the husbandmen people the plain to water their harvests; the maidens come from the villages, to wash their linen and draw water; they dress themselves beside the stream; their pitchers and their clothing lie scattered on the bank; they rub their bodies with the mire of the Nile, plunge into it, and sport among its waves. Several of them came swimming round our boat, and crying *ya fidi at maydi*: Give me a medin, Sir. (e) They swim with grace, and their hair, knotted in tresses, floats upon their shoulders; their skins are of a swarthy dark brown, but, in general they are exceedingly well formed, and the ease with which they swim, against the rapid stream, is a proof of the force and agility which exercise will bestow, on the most delicate bodies. Thus the beauteous Nauficcaa, (f) hav-

(e) "The medin is a small piece of plated copper worth three farthings.

(f) Odyssey, book the 6th.

ing washed her garments, bathed with her companions, when Ulysses unexpectedly stood naked before them. (g)

The wind freshens, and our bark swiftly cuts the tide; the tortuous course of the Nile every moment presents us a new prospect; here a village losing itself in the distant horizon, there a town, with a mosque and a grove of orange trees growing by its side; and every where dove houses, of a pyramidal form, in which innumerable flocks of pigeons are assembled. Fed on these fertile plains,

(g) Ulysses was shipwrecked on the Pheacian coast, where, overcome with fatigue, he slept, among the brakes, on a bed of flowers; thither Nausicaa and her companions came, to wash their garments in the river, and, having bathed, amused themselves with throwing stones, one of them fell near Ulysses, who awaking, ran to the place whence the sound of voices proceeded. At the sight of a man, who had no other covering than the bough of a tree, the female slaves all fled, but the daughter of Alcinous remained. With dignity she listened to the unfortunate stranger, gave him consolation, recalled her maidens, commanded them to wash and clothe him, in a tunic and a mantle. The poet has painted, with admirable art, in the person of Nausicaa, the noble dignity of birth and virtue, who, certain of herself, fled not at the sight of a naked man, and whom, being probably wretched, she might succour.

they

they are plump and delicate, and only cost three medins a couple: the inhabitants manure their plantations of water melons with their dung. Night draws on, and each takes to his arms; for the Nile swarms with pirates, who attack boats, under favour of the darkness, assassinate passengers, who are off their guard, and seize their effects. We have cast anchor; the master collects his crew, and, with a grave deportment, relates marvellous tales; to which his circular audience listens with silent attention.

From on board, Oct. 4.

We have lain all night between a small island and the mouth of the canal of Menouf, which communicates with both branches of the Nile, this of Rosetta, and the other of Damietta, and obliquely intersects the Delta. It is fifteen leagues long, very wide, and navigable three months in the year. Four leagues down the stream, on its banks, is the pleasant city of Menouf; (b) the capital of the province and the residence of the

(b) The Delta is divided into two provinces, in which two Beys reside. Menouf is the capital of the upper, and Mehala el Kebira of the lower; the first is called Menoufia, the latter Garbia.

Bey.

Bey. It stands in the midst of fertile fields; sown with wheat, beans, bamier, (i) and dourra; (k) shaded by groves of tamarind and date-trees, and inhabited by flights of pigeons, which, never hearing the terrifying explosion of powder, are as gentle as our domestic doves.

By break of day the north wind had filled our sails, and we coasted among isles, the grass of which grows exceedingly high, and serves as pasturage for buffaloes. The herdsman, seated on the withers of the foremost, descends the banks of the river, smacks his whip, and leads the way; the whole herd follow, and lowing swim to pasture, blowing the water from their large nostrils. During the summer heats they live in the

(i) The bamier bears a pyramidal pod, in several divisions, of a citron colour, and full of spicy seed. When cooked with meat, this pod is very wholesome food, and very agreeable to the taste. The Egyptians are liberal of it in their ragouts.

(k) The *Dourra*, or Indian millet, is a tall plant with a reedy leaf; it bears a pod that contains much grain, of which the husbandmen make bread. Tournefort calls it, *Milium arundinaceum plano alboque semine*: Linnæus, *bolcus dora glumis villosis seminibus compressis aristatis*.

Nile, lying among the waters up to the neck, and feeding on the tender herb that grows upon its banks. The cows yield abundance of rich milk, of which the inhabitants make excellent butter.

Our view is bounded, on the south, by a grove of dates and sycamores, behind which the lofty minarets of Terrana appear. This little town, built on the west of the Nile, is but eight leagues from the monastery of St. Macarius. Hither the natroun is brought, which is obtained from two lakes and much used by the Egyptians. Some miles higher, among the shade of palm-trees, we see the small port of Ouardan ; where Father Sicard burnt heaps of ancient manuscripts, deposited in a dove-house, pretending they were books of magic. (1) Thus, in a moment, blind fanaticism destroys the treasures of ages.

(1) The following passage is from Father Sicard. "I
" was informed that a dove-house, in this village, was fil-
" led with papers, containing magic characters, bought of
" some religious Copts, and Schismatics : I performed
" my duty, without resistance, and erected the Jerusa-
" lem crucifix, which the Copts revere, with great de-
" votion, in their stead." *Lettres Edifiantes*, page 53.
By this it appears he there burnt these manuscripts, full
of hieroglyphic characters.

The sun has half run his course ; we have left Ouardan on our right, and, if the wind continues, shall reach Boulac to-day. Not a village we pass but we see the children, of both sexes, exercising themselves by swimming : they daub themselves with mud, plunge into the water, and land but to dive again. Swimming is here the pleasure of necessity. Egypt being every where intersected by large and deep canals, which are full of water in the time of inundation ; it is often necessary to cross several of them, in going from one town to another ; and, on these occasions, men and women strip themselves of their light clothing, their shirts and drawers, tie them like turbans round the head, and betake themselves to swimming. A European is surprized to see the females preserving a small morsel of cloth to cover only their faces : a Turk could easily explain this phænomenon.

We are arrived at the angle of the Delta where the Nile separates, and where it is two miles wide ; the Arabs call this part of it *Batn el Bakara* ; the Cow's Belly. And now, for the first time, we perceive the tops of the two great pyramids, which are

eight

eight leagues distant, and are gilded by the rays of the setting sun: they resemble two pointed mountains, lost in the clouds. Hail to these monuments, the most ancient of the works of men! The very sight inspires religious awe! How many generations have passed away since these enormous piles have stood at the foot of that mountain where they still remain! The shades of night envelop them; and our sailors, now near the end of their voyage, make the air resound with their riotous joy; they light up the lanthorn, which is to prevent the vessel from being run down, and perhaps sunk, by the innumerable boats which pass and repass, and we are riding in the midst of an ever varying illumination. It is now eleven o'clock, and we have cast anchor before Boulac, the port of Grand Cairo.

L E T T E R VI.

*Grand Cairo, the capital of Egypt, described ;
enquiries concerning its foundation, with
proofs from the most authentic Arabian
writers.*

To M. L. M.

I HAVE now been nine months an inhabitant of Grand Cairo, that immense city, where Europeans crouch in the dust, and where the name of Frank is opprobrious. (m) There the fanatic laws of Mahomet reign triumphant, and the Mussulman, sunk in ignorance, imagines himself the most sublime of beings : with secret satisfaction he applies to himself the following texts :

“ You are the people on earth most excellent ; your laws ordain equity, forbid crimes, and you believe in God.”

“ The Christians, unbelieving Jews, and

(m) The most reproachful epithet an Egyptian can use is the word Frank, which is the general denomination for Europeans.

“ idolaters,

“ idolaters, are the most perverse of men ;
“ but the faithful, who practise virtue, are
“ the most perfect work of Heaven.” (n)

This oracle, which no one is so incredulous as to dispute, feeds their pride, and they tread under foot all who are not of their faith. To avoid being insulted by the populace, and accomplish the purport of my voyage, I have assumed the habit and manners of a Turk ; my tanned skin is become Egyptian ; a shawl, bound round my head, conceals my hair, and long whiskers shade my cheeks. Thanks to this metamorphosis, and the ease with which I speak Arabic, I unmolested walk the streets of this city, and its environs ; and live familiar with its strange inhabitants. Curiosity often leads me beyond the limits of prudence, but the voice of reason is feeble where an imperious passion rules. To this passion, however, you are indebted for descriptions, which will, at least, possess the merit of being exact.

Grand Cairo is a modern built city ; this is proved, beyond all doubt, by the writings

of the Oriental historians. I will cite their own words ; for, 'when we speak of their times, they themselves can certainly afford us the best information.

" In the year 358 of the Hegyra, (o) " *Faubar*, General of *Moaz*, and descendant " of the princes of *Kirouan*, entered Egypt, " at the head of a formidable army, and " conquered it from the Abassides. (p) From " that time, the prayers were read in the " name of the Fatimites. (q) The con- " queror, wanting a place in which to " establish his soldiers, laid the foundations " of *Elkahera*, (r) built a palace for the

(o) *Elmacin*, page 222.

(p) The caliphs of Bagdad, slumbering upon the throne, were successively stripped of their vast dominions, by their governors ; till, of a power which made the whole world tremble, nothing remained, except the title, and the barren privilege of being named first at prayers, in all the mosques. The conquest of *Moaz* deprived them of that honour, which was not restored to them till 207 years after, when *Salah Eddin*, of the family of the *Ayoubites*, seized on Egypt.

(q) The Fatimite caliphs derive their origin from *Ali*, who espoused *Fatima*, the daughter of *Mahomet*. In the year 296 of the Hegyra, they founded a kingdom, on the coast of Africa ; where they reigned till the year 567.

(r) The city the Europeans call *Grand Cairo*.

“Emperor, and commanded the nobility
 “and army to inhabit this new city. Four
 “years after this, Moaz forsook his king-
 “dom, in Barbary, and came to enjoy his
 “conquest. This year the building of Grand
 “Cairo was completed, and the dominion
 “of the Fatimites rendered permanent.”

Moaz, in a mandate to his son, has the following words. “At the moment this city was founded, the planet Mars was in ascension; and it is Mars who conquers the universe; (s) therefore have I given it the name of Elkahera.” (t) The foundation of Grand Cairo has been a subject of dispute, and error, among travellers, and learned men; (u) permit me, therefore, Sir, to add, to the testimony of Elmakin, the description

(s) The excavations were dug, which surrounded the city; materials were prepared; the astronomers, with mathematical instruments, observed the ascent of Mars; at the proper moment, the signal was given, and the foundation of Elkahera was laid, with shouts of joy.

(t) The word Elkahera is the name of the planet Mars; and likewise signifies victorious.

(u) Prosper Alpinus says, “Grand Cairo is the city which the ancients called Memphis.” *Voyage d'Egypte*, page 17.

Father Sicard pretends Grand Cairo was built by
 Ebn

scription of Abulfeda. (*x*) This writer, famous both as a geographer and historian, has bequeathed us many interesting particulars no where else to be found.

“ Beside Fostat, (*y*) a little to the north, “ stands the city of Elkahera, built by the “ Fatimite caliphs. These princes, who had “ founded an empire on the coast of Bar- “ bary, became masters of Egypt. The “ first conqueror who reigned there was

Ebn el Aas, the lieutenant of Omar. *Lettres Edifiantes*, page 466.

The passages I have cited are sufficient to refute these European writers ; whose opinion, void of proof, is contradictory to all Oriental history.

(*x*) “ Oua ala janeb el Fostat men shamaliha, midi-
“ net elkahera, ahedsha elkolfa elfatemioun Ellazin Za-
“ harou Belgarb, tom melekou el masr ; oua kan aoual
“ men melek menhom bemastr Moaz ebn Elmansor—
“ Oua akhtat elkahera fi séné tessaa oua khamfin, oua
“ talat maïat ; oua canet elkahera bistanlebe, tailoun,
“ ala elcarb men medinet melkhom elmarouf belcataïah ;
“ oua faymet elkahera l'eltefaoual ai ickhor men khalef
“ amrha ; oua elkahera leist ala shatt el Nil, belfi
“ sharkio ; oua el Fostat ala hafat el Nil ; oua hie
“ mahatt, oua acllaa lelmarakeb, oua besabab Zalek far
“ el Fostat aetar rezca, oua zrkas asaara men elkahera.”

Abulfeda's Description of Egypt.

(*y*) Fostat is the city which we improperly call Old Cairo.

“Moaz, the son of Elmansor.—He laid the foundation of Cairo, in the year 359 of the Hegyra.—The ground on which it was built was a garden, belonging to the son of Toulon, (z) which stood beside the royal quarter of Catayah, (a) in which he resided. This new city was named Elkahera, as predictive of the conquests it should hereafter obtain over its enemies. It is not, like Fostat, situated beside the river Nile, but a little to the east; for which reason the latter is best adapted to trade; boats come up to it

(z) Toulon, a famous governor of Egypt, rebelled against Abou Elabbas, the son of Elmetouakkel, the fifteenth caliph of the Abassides, in the year 264 of the Hegyra, and made himself master of the country, over which his descendants reigned till the year 292, when, being vanquished by Mahommed, general of Moctefi Bellah, the seventeenth caliph of the Abassides, they were brought to Bagdad. Elmacin.

(a) Toulon built a suburb, on the north of Fostat, so large that they called it the royal city of Catayah. This suburb is now included in Grand Cairo, and still contains a magnificent mosque, which this prince caused to be built, as well as the palace he inhabited, which is at present known by the name of Calaa elka-beck.

“from all Egypt, and provisions are exceedingly cheap there.”

Abulfeda, and experience, both, tell us the situation of Grand Cairo is not so advantageous as that of Fostat ; nor is its distance from the Nile the only disadvantage felt there : the steril chain of mountains, called Mokattam, totally void of verdure, presenting a prospect of arid sand, and stones calcined by the sun, are on its east ; and, when the north wind does not blow, reflect a suffocating heat on the city ; the inhabitants breathe a burning air, and are obliged to wait till night for refreshing coolness. For this reason, it was long before any thing was to be seen where Cairo now stands but gardens, pleasure houses, and barracks for the troops ; it owes its sudden increase to an incident, which I shall relate with pleasure, because it affects our own history. The French, under the command of king Lusignan, extended their conquests over Syria, and carried their victorious arms as far as Egypt.

“ In the year 564 of the Hegyra ^(b) they
“ took

^(b) “ Oua fi séné arba oua settin oua khamsé maïat
“ elfrangi melekou belbes, oua nahabouha, oua catalou

“ took Belbeis by assault, put a part of the inhabitants to the sword, and led the rest captive. Elated with success, they marched toward, and seized on, Cairo. *Sbaouar*, king of Egypt, set fire to Fostat, fearing it would fall into their hands, and the flames spread so rapidly that the city burnt during four and fifty days. Unable to repel, by force, his enterprizing enemies, this feeble prince had recourse to artifice ; he gave them a hundred thousand dinars (crowns of gold) and promised them a million, on condition they would retire ; they did so, and lost their conquest and the promised sum.”

By the disaster of Fostat, Grand Cairo became enriched ; the unfortunate inhabitants quitted their ashes, and took refuge in the new city, which assumed the pompous surname of *Masr*, peculiar to the capital of

“ ahelha, oua esrouhom ; tom farou men belbes oua nazclou ala elkahera oua haserouha. Feharac *Sbaouar* medinet masr raufan men en iemlekha elfrangi ; fe baqwaït elnar tehrokha arbaat oua khamfin ioum ; oua saneh *Sbaouar* elfrangi, ala elf elf dinar, iehmelha eleihom, fe hamal eleihom maiat elf dinar, fe salhom en ierhelou an elkahera leicdar ala gema elmal oua hafalo, fe rahalou.” *Abulfcda.*

Egypt,

Egypt, and Salab Eddin came here, and established the dynasty of the Ayoubites. (c)

“ In the year 572 of the Hegyra, he built
 “ the walls which surround Grand Cairo, and
 “ the castle on mount Mokattam. (d) The
 “ circumference of these walls was 29,300
 “ cubits, (about three leagues) and he conti-
 “ nued this work till his death.” (e)

These walls are still almost perfect, though occasionally much concealed by ruins and

(c) The famous Salah Eddin, or Saladin, who twenty years warred with the Franks, and drove them almost entirely from the East, was appointed governor of Egypt, by Nour Eddin, in the year 564 of the Hegyra, of which he became sovereign three years after, and rapidly extended his conquests in Syria and Mesopotamia. He was born at *Tecrit*, a strong place between Bagdad and Mosul, in the year 533 of the Hegyra, and died at Damascus in 582.

(d) “ Fi hade efféné (etnin oua khamsé maiat) amar
 “ Salah Eddin beinan effour eddiar ala masr elkahera,
 “ oua elkalaat ala eggebal elmokattam. Oua dour telk
 “ tessaat oua aherin elf draa, oua talat maiat drza, oua
 “ lam izel elaml il a en mat.”

Life of Salah Eddin.

(e) This passage absolutely overturns the opinion of Father Sicard, who says the castle was built by Queen Semiramis; and also that of Shaw, Niebuhr, and many other writers, who have supposed it the fortress of Babylon, which the Persians built in Egypt.

houses: they have several gates, of simple and majestic architecture; which, with some mosques, deserve the admiration of travellers. Salah Eddin, the protector of letters, built a university in the quarter of *Caraffe*; also the beautiful mosque in which is the tomb of *Shaffey*, the founder of one of the four sects of the Sunnites. (f) The mosque still subsists, but the university is in ruins, and the academy *Djamab Elashar* (the mosque of flowers) has supplied its place. Arts and sciences flourished till the Turks became masters of Egypt, but then decayed. Enemies to human knowledge, they have stifled wisdom and learning throughout their whole empire: their only studies, at present, are theology, while their innumerable commentators have made a chaos of the Koran; grammar, which is necessary to read this book correctly, in which is contained their religion and laws; and astrology, a study to which ignorant nations always are addicted.

In the fifteenth century, Grand Cairo was one of the richest and most flourishing cities

(f) Those sects of the Sunnites, called orthodox by the Mahometans, are *Shaffey*, *Hanefi*, *Hanbali*, and *Maleki*.

in

in the world, the emporium of Europe and Asia, and traded from the Straits of Gibraltar to the farthest limits of India. The discovery of the Cape of Good-hope, and the Ottoman conquest, have deprived it of a great part of its opulence and splendor: yet, notwithstanding many of its canals, which brought the treasures of the East and West, are become dry, and the city itself groans under the yoke of the Pacha and four and twenty Beys, its admirable situation, and the fertility of Egypt, are advantages so great that, in a space of three leagues, it still contains a multitudinous people, and immense riches.

I hope, Sir, the authorities above cited will ascertain the origin of Grand Cairo. Before I am more circumstantial concerning this city, it seems necessary to describe Fostat, of which I have spoken so much, and this will be the subject of my next letter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER VII.

Fostat founded by Amrou Ebn Elaas: the city, its inhabitants and monuments, with the ancient canal that ran to the Red Sea, described. Refutation of those authors who have supposed this city to be the ancient Babylon, founded by Semiramis.

To M. L. M.

THE city of Fostat, commonly called Old Cairo, has been, Sir, the subject of many discussions among the learned who have written on Egypt. (g) Most of them, searching

(g) M. Maillet pretends the governors of Egypt, under the Emperors of Constantinople, made Fostat their place of residence, when Amrou son of El Aas took it, after a long siege. *Description de l'Egypte, tome 1. p. 394.*

—This is an error.

Shaw, speaking after the geographer of Nubia, says, “ The city of Fostat is the very same called Misr, a name derived from Misraim, the son of Ham, the son of Noah, to whom be peace, for he was its first founder.” Shaw’s Travels, p. 294.—This opinion is far from the truth.

Father Sicard, citing Josephus, says, “ Old Cairo was the ancient Lété. Cambyses settled the Babylonians

searching Greek and Latin authors for its origin, have been deceived: had they looked into the annals of the East, they would have found the truth, and avoided a multitude of errors which have glided into their descriptions. I shall follow my usual plan, and, instead of opinion, cite facts.

“ In the twentieth year of the Hegyra,
 “ Amrou, son of El Aas, built Mast Fostat,
 “ in the very place where he had encamped
 “ before he went to the siege of Alexan-
 “ dria. His tent was left standing there,
 “ because he would not destroy a dove’s
 “ nest and her young: returning from his
 “ conquest, the general laid the foundation
 “ of the city, to which he gave the name of
 “ Fostat.” (b)

This passage precisely marks the foundation of Fostat, where the governors sent by the Caliphs fixed their residence. It took the

“ nians in this city; who, having conquered Egypt,
 “ remained there.” *Lettres Edifiantes*, p. 473.

Old Cairo was not built in the time of Josephus, as history testifies, but the fortress of Babylon, standing near the place where that city was built, remained. .

(b) Elmacin. History of the Arabs—Fostat, in Arabic, signifies tent.

surname of *Masr*, (*i*) which Memphis had before borne, and which the Arabs always gave to the capital of Egypt ; and its situation, on the banks of the Nile, and near a canal communicating with the Red Sea, soon made it flourish. It was about two leagues in circumference, when Shaouar, (*k*) five hundred years after its foundation, set it on fire, to preserve it from the French. This was the fatal period of its power; for, with its inhabitants, it lost its trade and riches. Grand Cairo then became the abode of lords and kings, and received the pompous name of *Masr*. *Fostat*, then, added the epithet *Elatik*, signifying the ancient, to that of *Masr*, which it preserves to this day. (*l*)

To

(*i*) The Arabs pretend that Misraim, the son of Ham, came and settled in Egypt, which they, therefore, call *Masr*; and bestow the same epithet on the metropolis of the country.

(*k*) See the preceding letter.

(*l*) The oriental historians have never called *Fostat* by the name of *Kahera* (Cairo); they first named it *Fostat*, then *Fostat Masr*; and, since its decline, *Masr Elatik*. The Venetian merchants first gave it the name of *Old Cairo*, and travellers have repeated the error.

Oua Fostat madiné mahedta benaha amrou ebn elaas,
lamma fatah diar masr fi khalafet Omar. Oua can fi
mauda el Fostat Casr men bena elauail iecal lo casr
elshamah,

To the above description of Elmacin the learned Abulfeda adds circumstances which throw great light on history. "Amrou, son of El Aas, having conquered Egypt, laid the foundation of Fostat, under the Caliph of Omar. Near the place on which he built it was an antique castle, called *the Castle of Lights*. The mosque of Omar, built at a little distance from the ground on which the general had erected his tent, stood within the city. Fostat Masr was the seat of government, in Egypt, till the time that Ebn Toulon built, north of its walls, the suburb of *Catayah*, to which he retired with his army, and there founded the celebrated temple which bears his name." (m)

The outlines of the castle, mentioned by Abulfeda, still remain. They are thick walls,

elshamah, fe can Fostat amrou be janeb el jameh elmarouf bejamèh Omar be masr. Oua lam tezel masr, oua hié Fostat courch lelmemleké eddiar elmasriat hetta taula ahmed Ebn Toulon. Oua bena lo oua l'afquiero elcataïah fi shemali masr. Oua bena and elcataïah djamèh elmarouf be djamèh Tailoun. Abulfeda Description of Egypt, p. 33.

(m) I mentioned this temple in the preceding letter; it is one of the most beautiful mosques in Grand Cairo.

in

in the form of a parallelogram, the antiquity of which is very striking. It stands east of Fostat, on the side of mount Mokattam. Christians inhabit these ruins, among which the Greeks and Copts have churches. Several ancient arches are still standing, between this place and the river; there are others half destroyed, and a hexagonal building, on the banks of the Nile, denotes the remains of the aqueduct which conveyed water to the castle. Here then, Sir, behold the fortress of Babylon; an object of research and error to so many of the learned: it was built by the Persians when they ravaged Egypt, under Cambyses; or, as other writers will have it, when Semiramis came there, at the head of a formidable army. We may know it from the description of Strabo. (n) The Persians, who

(n) Up the Nile, above Heliopolis, now called Matarree, two leagues from Grand Cairo, is the Castle of Babylon, fortified by nature and art; it was built by some Babylonians, who, with the consent of their sovereign, retired thither. Here, the Romans keep one of the three legions, who guard Egypt, in garrison. The mountain gently descends from that fortress to the banks of the Nile; a hundred and fifty slaves are continually employed in raising water thither, by the means of wheels and screws. Strabo, lib. 17.

adored

adored the sun, kept a perpetual fire here, which occasioned the Arabs to name it the castle of lights. (o)

Masr Elatik is only half a league in extent, but is still very populous, and tolerably commercial. The boats from Upper Egypt come here, and from hence ascend again up the Said. (p) The Copts are very numerous, and have several churches in this place, the largest of which is that of St. Macarius, where the patriarch is installed. The church of St. Sergius contains a cavern which the christians hold in great veneration, pretending that the holy family, flying from Herod, retired here. I saw the history of this flight painted on the door of a recess, in which they say mass: the costume of the East is perfectly observed in this picture, and the head of the Virgin tolerable. The neglect of costume, among

(o) Niebuhr has given the parallelogram figure of this castle, in his plan of Cairo; but he has taken it for the citadel, the honour of constructing which he has bestowed upon the Arabs.

(p) The Arabs call Upper Egypt, Said, beginning above Masr Fostat, and ending at Assouan, formerly Syene.

modern painters, too often destroys the effect of their finest compositions.

A hexagonal building stands at the entrance of Old Cairo, each side of which is eighty feet wide, and one hundred high. Oxen mount up a very gentle ascent, and turn a wheel, which raises water to the summit of this building: five basons receive and return the water into an aqueduct, sustained by three hundred arches, which conveys it into a reservoir; there other oxen, and a new machine, raise it to the palace of the Pacha. This is a work of the Arabs, which they have constructed according to the plan of that described by Strabo, the remains of which are seen between the citadel of Babylon and the Nile; the only difference is the Mahometans employ oxen instead of men.

The environs of Masr Elatik are scattered over with ruins, which indicate its ancient extent, and which, were history defective, would sufficiently attest it to be modern. They want that majestic character the Egyptians gave their edifices, and the impression of which time cannot efface. Neither sphinx, column, nor obelisk can be found, among these

these heaps of rubbish. Within the city are thick walls, round a great square, in which they deposit the corn of the Thebais, destined for the provision of the troops. This enclosure they call Joseph's granaries, and the name has imposed upon some travellers, who have taken it, without examination, for the work of the son of Jacob, though there is nothing appertaining to it which bespeaks antiquity, and history has informed us it was built by the Mamluk kings. Memphis, the residence of the Pharaohs, was the place where Joseph, the superintendent of the corn of Egypt, erected his magazines.

Just without Masr Elatik, near the water works, the *khalig*, (q) which runs through Grand Cairo, and which is annually opened with so much ceremony, begins. Most modern writers have attributed this canal to the Emperor Trajan, (r) on the authority

(q) The Arabs call all canals, *khalig*.

(r) Shaw calls it, *annis Trajanus*. Shaw's Travels, p. 294.

Pococke says—"Opposite to this reservoir of water, "at the Nile, is the canal that conveys the water to "Cairo, and seems to be that which was made by Tra- "jan." Poc. Trav. vol. I. p. 27.

authority of that passage in Ptolemy, which says, the river of Trajan runs between Heliopolis and Babylon; but this Emperor cut no canal in Egypt; a work of this kind must be attributed to his successor, who built the city of Antinoe. The canal Ptolemy means begins a league and a half below Old Cairo, and passes near Heliopolis; and this is what Macrizi, (*s*) with reason, calls the khalig of Adrian.

The origin of the canal, the mouth of which is at Masr Elatik is too well described by Elmacin, for any one, who consults oriental history, to confound it with that of Adrian. Amrou having sent intelligence to Omar of the taking of Alexandria, and camels loaded with wheat to Medina, then ravaged by famine, the Caliph congratulated him on his success, and thus added. “ Dig a khalig, (*t*) by which the productions of Egypt may be taken into the

Father Sicard goes farther, and says—“ This is the canal which Ptolemy calls, amnis Trajanus; Quintus Curtius, Oxius; and the Arabs, Merakemi.” Lettres Edifiantes, p. 470.

(*s*) Macrizi, history of Egypt.

(*t*) Elmacin, history of the Arabs.

“ sea of Colzoum, (*u*) and from thence to
 “ the port of Medina. Amrou executed
 “ this great work, and dug the khalig to
 “ which the name of *the river of the princes*
 “ *of the faithful* was given; (*x*) and the
 “ vessels which go from Fostat carry the
 “ productions of Egypt into the sea of Col-
 “ zoum.”

This, Sir, was the origin of the famous canal which travellers, repeating each others words, have called amnis Trajanus. It begins near Fostat, runs, lengthways, through Grand Cairo, fills the ponds of that city, and empties itself, some leagues beyond, in the *Birque* (*y*) of the pilgrims of Mecca. The various princes who have successively reigned over Egypt, several of whom were enemies to the Caliphs, have suffered it to become dammed up, and it no longer empties its waters into the Red Sea; but, as it was cut through rocks for the space of twenty-four leagues, the mud and sand with

(*u*) Colzoum, is the name the Arabs give to the Red Sea; it was derived from the small town of Colzoum, the ruins of which are some distance from Suez.

(*x*) *Khalig el emir el mucumenin.*

(*y*) *Birque* is an Arabic word, signifying an extensive piece of water.

which it is filled might easily be removed. By this important communication with the Red Sea, Grand Cairo would once more become the most wealthy and commercial city in the world.

Let me hope, Sir, your love for truth will indulge me in these discussions, since they serve to throw light on certain parts of history which have been in the utmost obscurity. I shall soon have occasion to enliven and make my narrative more agreeable; the country where I am at present is another world, presenting scenes continually new; I will endeavour to trace them such as they are. You shall hear the Turks speak for themselves, shall see them act, and I will leave to you the satisfaction which the enlightened mind always takes in judging for itself.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER VIII.

The extent of Grand Cairo; its streets, squares, and mosques. The palace of Salab Eddin, built on a height which overlooks the city, where are found stately columns of granite, and the famous well of Joseph, described.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE length of Grand Cairo, Sir, built on each side of the canal of the prince of the faithful, is one league and a half, from north to south; and three quarters of a league, in width, from east to west. Its whole extent is best seen from the castle, built by Salah Eddin, on Mount Mokattam, (z) which overlooks the city, by which it is half encircled, like an immense crescent. The streets are so narrow and winding that it is impossible to follow their direction, amidst the

(z) Mokattam signifies cut, and this rock is so called because it has been separated by art from the mountain which, beginning at the cataracts, ends here: and from which it is only about a hundred paces distant.

multitude of houses which stand crowding on each other; vast vacancies only can be distinguished, and these are squares which become ponds in the time of inundation, and gardens the rest of the year. They are rowed over in September, and covered with flowers and verdure in April. Some of the many temples with which this city abounds tower like citadels; and once, during the time of sedition, the rebels retired to the mosque of Sultan Haffan, from the top of which they battered the castle with cannon. There is a vast dome over this grand edifice; its cornice, grotesquely sculptured, projects considerably, and its front is faced with the finest marble: the gates are now walled up, and are guarded by Janissaries.

Grand Cairo contains near three hundred mosques, most of them with minarets, which are high steeples of light architecture, and surrounded by galleries. These give an agreeable variety to a city which, from the flatness of its roofs, appears uniform. Public criers, at appointed hours, (a) call the people to prayers

(a) That is to say, at sun rising, noon, three o'clock, sun setting, and about two hours after. These different services

prayers from these minarets : about eight hundred voices are heard at the same moment, from all quarters of the city, calling man to the performance of his duty to God. The Turks abhor the noise of bells, and say it offends the ears, is unmeaning, and proper only for beasts of burthen. They derive this opinion from Mahomet, who, like a great politician, desirous that all his institutions should have one tendency, and willing to captivate both the senses and understanding, rejected the trumpet of the Jews, and the rattle of the Oriental Christians. He knew the human voice would make a greater impression on the mind of man, than the grating sound of insensible brass, and produced a holy summons, sent by heaven, conformable to his views. (b)

services are called *Salaat el Figr*, *el aâbr*, *el aâfr*, *el magrib*, *el aâsha*.

(b) The following is the form of this summons : God is great. I bear witness, there is but one God ; I bear witness that Mahomet is his prophet. Come to prayer ; come to worship. God is great ; he is only one God.

Allah Acbar. Eshhed en la illa illa allah ; Eshhed en Mahammed rasoul allah. Haï ala es salat ; haï ala el falah. Allah Acbar. La illa illa allah.

The castle of Cairo stands on a steep rock, and is surrounded by thick walls, on which are strong towers. It was a place of great force before the invention of gunpowder, but, being commanded by the neighbouring mountains, it would not, now, stand the fire of a battery erected there two hours. It is more than the fourth of a league in circumference; the rock being steep, there are two roads cut to it, which lead to doors guarded by Affabs and Janissaries. (c) The first watch the lower part of the fortress, and the others what is properly called the citadel, whence, with six wretched pieces of artillery, turned on the Pacha's apartment, they oblige him to retire, as soon as the Beys have given the command.

This castle includes the palaces of the Sultans of Egypt, now almost buried under their own ruins; domes overthrown, heaps of rubbish, gilding, and pictures, the colours of which have defied corroding time, stately marble columns still standing, but in general without capitals; such are the

(c) The Affabs and Janissaries are troops belonging to the Grand Seignor; but always bought from their duty by the Beys.

tokens

tokens of its former magnificence. In one of the halls of these ruinous buildings the rich carpet is fabricated which the Emir Hadgi, (*d*) bears every year to Mecca; the old carpet is obtained in bits, by the pilgrims, as holy relics, and the new covers the Caaba, or temple of Abraham. (*e*)

The Pachas inhabit a large building, containing nothing remarkable, the windows of which look towards the square Caramaydan. The hall of audience, where the Divan assembles three times a week, is as long, but not so wide, as that of the Palais (the justice chamber) at Paris, and is stained by the blood of the Beys, massacred some years ago by order of the Porte. These are, however, at present, the sovereigns of Egypt; for the Grand Seignor's representative is a phantom with which they sport: they keep him to serve their own purposes, then dismiss him with shame. He cannot leave his palace, in which he is a prisoner, without their permission. Thus humbled is the Ottoman pride, thus feeble,

(*d*) Emir Hadgi, or prince of the caravan, is the title of the Bey who undertakes to escort the caravan which departs every year from Cairo to Mecca.

(*e*) See *abrégé de la vie de Mahomet* by Savary, p. 4.
thus

thus reduced is the empire which threatened to enslave Europe !

The mint is beside Caramaydan, where they coin a prodigious quantity of medins, and sequins, (f) struck with the die of the Sheik Elbalad, (g) which I have several times visited. The sequins are made of the gold-dust supplied by the caravan of Abyssinia, which the master of the mint assured me annually brought more than 166,666l. sterling.

Joseph's well is among the things the most curious the castle contains. (h) It is sunk in the rock, two hundred and eighty feet deep, and forty-two in circumference. It includes two excavations, not perpendicular to each other. A stair-case, the descent of which is exceedingly gentle, is carried round ; the par-

(f) A sequin is a gold coin, worth about six and threepence.

(g) The Bey most powerful, in Grand Cairo, assumes the title Sheik Elbalad, governor of the country, and the right of coining.

(h) Pococke says a Vizir named Joseph sunk this well, about seven hundred years ago, by order of Sultan Mahammed, the son of Calaoun : the Egyptians affirm it was Salah Eddin. It certainly, however, is the work of the Arabs, and not the Babylonians, as Father Sicard pretends.

tition which separates this stair-case from the well is part of the rock, left only six inches thick, with windows cut, at intervals, to give light ; but as they are small, and some of them low, it is necessary to descend by the light of candles. There is a reservoir, and a level space, at that part of the well where it takes a new direction ; and oxen which turn a machine that draws water from the bottom of the well. Other oxen, above, raise it from this reservoir by a similar machine. This water comes from the Nile ; and, as it has been filtered through sand impregnated with salt and nitre, is brackish.

The ruins of the palace of Salah Eddin are in the Janiffary's quarter, and include the divan of Joseph, (i) the dome of which, and a part of the walls have fallen. There are thirty columns of red granite still standing : the shaft of each, forty-five feet high, is a single stone. The variations in their size, and the ornaments sculptured round the capitals, bespeak their having been taken from

(i) Salah Eddin was called Joseph, the son of Ayoub ; his other names are pompous titles, given him by the Mahometans, on account of his victories over the Christian princes, whom he drove out of Syria.

more ancient monuments. Some distance from these beautiful columns is a delightful balcony, or pavilion, standing in the highest part of the citadel, the prospect from which is most extensive. The whole of Grand Cairo, with its multitudinous mosques and minarets, is seen at a view. Towards Boulac, fruitful fields, and rich harvests, interspersed with groves of date-trees ; Masr Fostat, on the South-west, and the plains of Said beyond, which, when inundated by the Nile, contain hamlets scattered up and down like islands. The landscape is terminated by the pyramids, which, like pointed mountains, appear lost in the clouds. The eye is never weary of objects so various and so grand, and I have more than once enjoyed this view. The fresh air breathed in this elevated situation, and the coolness it imparts is an additional pleasure. Seated in this delightful pavilion, how many agreeable thoughts arise in the mind ; yet how suddenly are these sweet meditations disturbed by gloomy melancholy ! Here, in these rich fields, arts and sciences once flourished, where now an ignorant and barbarous people trample them under foot. Tyranny, with its iron sceptre is become

become the scourge of this first of countries, in which the miseries of men seem to increase in proportion to the efforts of nature to render them happy ! It was but yesterday, Sir, I was deeply affected by these reflections, when, walking before the castle, I beheld the magnificent prospect I have described.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

Boulac, the port of Grand Cairo, its magazines, environs, and the gardens of Hel-lai described; with curious details concerning the Mekias, or Nilometer, on the beautiful island Raouda, which abounds in delightful groves.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

YOU have more than once, Sir, seen Boulac mentioned in my letters. This is the place where all the merchandize, coming from Damietta and Alexandria, is landed. This modern town, only half a league from Grand Cairo, on the eastern bank of the Nile, is two miles long, but narrow. It contains superb public baths, and vast okals. These are square buildings, including a large court with a portico, over which is a winding gallery: the ground floor is divided into spacious magazines, and the rooms above have neither furniture nor ornaments. Here strangers live,

live, and deposit their wares ; and, these okals, having only one gate, like that of a citadel, are secure, in time of revolt, from all insult. These are the only inns in Egypt, and strangers are obliged to find their own furniture and food ; for, in this country, money cannot procure dinners ready dressed.

In front of the houses of Boulac are seen thousands of vessels, of various forms and sizes, at anchor. Some, large and strong, carrying two masts, are trading barks ; these usually have a large cabin for passengers : others, light, and without decks, are only to ferry the people from one side of the river to the other. A third sort are pleasure boats, artfully carved and painted, containing charming cabins, carpeted over, and affording shelter from the sun's heat. Here, reclined at ease on cushions, the wealthy go to breathe that fresh and cooling air which is continually active upon the Nile, and here admire the variegated landscapes which its ever verdant banks present. When the wind is favourable the sail is hoisted, and these light boats seem to fly over the surface of the water,

when

when contrary, robust watermen give them almost equal speed.

Opposite Boulac is the small village of En-baba, consisting of miserable mud huts, built of a round form, under the shade of sycamores, against which they rest, some houses of sun-dried bricks, and a small mosque, which is seen at a distance among the foliage of dates and tamarinds. The inhabitants of Cairo go there to buy excellent butter, during winter; and, in summer, delicious melons.

Half a league North-east of Boulac is the old castle of Hellai, (*k*) which is falling in ruins. Here the Beys, accompanied by their stately train, go to receive the new Pacha, and conduct him in pomp to the prison from which they have just expelled his predecessor. Round this castle are spacious enclosures, where the orange, citron and pomegranate, planted without order, grow exceedingly high and tufted: their twining branches form charming arbours, over which the sycamore and palm extend their dark green foliage,

(*k*) It seems probable this castle derived its name from Heliopolis, from which it is not far distant.

and among them rivulets meander, and the clustering rose and bazil bloom. (1) It is impossible to describe the delight of breathing the fresh air beneath these enchanting shades, under a climate so continually possessing the burning heat of the dog-days; this pleasure only can be felt. The odour of the orange flower, and the aromatic emanations of balsamick plants gently renovate the senses, benumbed by heat, and infuse the most agreeable sensations. It is dangerous for a European to frequent these groves too much, being peopled by concubines, whom the jealous Turks, if they slip, never pardon.

Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.

Beyond these gardens is the canal the construction of which Macrizi attributes to the emperor Adrian. Ptolemy calls it the Trajan river: it is almost dammed up.

Having hastily viewed these charming places, I returned, embarked at Boulac, and proceeded along the Nile as far as the island

(1) The bazil, in Egypt, grows thrice as high as in France, and exceedingly tufted and odoriferous.

Raouda, (m) which lies between Old Cairo and Giza. For the space of a league the eye is delighted with immense fields, of wheat, flax, and beans, intermingled with groves of dates, and hamlets. I also saw the mouth of a large canal, on the left bank of the river, before I came to Giza. (n)

Being come to the projecting part of the island of Raouda, I went to see the Nilometer which the Arabs call *Mekias*. (o) This is a high marble column in the middle of a basin, the bottom of which is on a level with the bed of the Nile. It is divided, to the very top, into cubits and inches, and has a Corinthian capital on which a beam rests that supports a gallery. The waters enter the basin through a conduit, when the inundation begins, and the criers examine the column every morning, and publish the daily increase

(m) Raouda signifies gardens, and the island has obtained this name because it possesses some charming ones.

(n) I several times walked along the banks, and have followed its course for the space of a league; it has various windings, and runs toward Libya. This was probably one of the canals which formerly ran to the lake Mareotis.

(o) *Mekias* signifies measure.

through

through the streets of Grand Cairo. When it is sixteen cubits high, they open with great ceremony, the mound which dams up *the canal of the prince of the faithful*, and the Nile streams through the city amidst the acclamations of the whole people assembled; but I will describe this festival to you in a letter on that particular subject.

Before the Arabs had conquered Egypt, the nilometer stood in the little town of Halouan, five leagues south of Fostat, and opposite the ancient Memphis. “ In the year “ ninety-six of the Hegira, (*p*) Ozama, go-“ vernor of that rich country, wrote to the “ emperor, Soliman Abd Elmelek, that the “ Mekias of Halouan had been thrown “ down. (*q*) The Caliph commanded ano-“ ther to be built in the island that lies be-“ tween Fostat and Giza. A hundred and “ forty eight years after, this nilometer fell, “ and the Emperor Elmetouakkel had ano-“ ther erected in the same place, which was

(*p*) Elmacin history of the Arabs.

(*q*) It was natural to place the nilometer near Memphis, which, when the Arabs conquered Egypt, was the residence of its governors; perhaps there were two, one on each side of the river.

“called the new Mekias.” This nilometer still remains. Nejem Eddin, son of Melek el Adel, who died at Mansoura, during the expedition of Lewis the ninth into Egypt, charmed with the situation, built a vast palace near the Mekias, and leaving that built by Salah Eddin went and inhabited it. The slaves whom he entrusted to guard it were named Baharites, or Maritime, and distinguished themselves at the battle of Mansoura. The apartments and walls of this palace are now ruinous, but the bason, owing to its solid construction, and the column, which is well supported, though they have stood nine hundred years, appear to have received no damage from time.

If Murtadi may be credited, in his description of the miracles of Egypt, the year that Amrou conquered this country the Nile failed in its annual increase, and the chief men came to supplicate the conqueror’s permission to follow the ancient custom of dressing a young virgin in rich robes, and casting her into the river. The Mahometan general firmly opposed the requisition, and the Nile did not increase during the three months after the summer solstice. But the alarmed Egyptians

coming

coming to solicit him again, he wrote to Omar, giving an account of what had passed. The Caliph answered—“ O Amrou, I “ approve thy conduct, and the fortitude “ thou hast shewn. The law of Mahomet “ ought to abolish such barbarous customs. “ When thou hast read this letter, cast the “ enclosed into the river.”

The enclosed letter contained the following words.

“ *In the name of God, benevolent and merciful.*

“ The Lord shower down his benedictions “ on Mahomet and his family! Abd Allah “ Omar, son of Khetteb, prince of the faithful, to the Nile.

“ If of thy own inherent virtue thou hast “ hitherto flowed in Egypt, suspend thy “ course; but if it be by the will of Almighty “ God that thou waterest this land, we supplicate “ him to command thee to do now as “ heretofore.

“ Peace be with the Prophet, and health “ and blessing upon his family.”

The historian adds that no sooner had this letter been thrown into the Nile than the

waters rose several cubits. Though Omar, who could burn four hundred thousand volumes without remorse, might have been very capable of writing this, and though it may appear to be his stile and manner, I will by no means, Sir, warrant its authenticity, on the faith of Murtadi; much less the miracle which followed: the custom, however, which still subsists, seems to prove the Egyptians formerly sacrificed a youthful virgin to the God of the Nile; for at present they make a clay statue, in the form of a woman, which they call *The betrothed*, and place it on the mound of the khalig of the prince of the faithful, and throw it into the river previous to the opening of the dam. Is not this the remains of a barbarous worship, which the Ottomans, notwithstanding the horror they hold all kind of idolatry in, could not wholly abolish, being the ancient error of a superstitious people?

Having visited the Mekias, and the remains of the palace of Nejem Eddin, I walked through the island, which is one vast garden, surrounded by the waters of the Nile. Walls, breast high, protect its banks from the impetuous current. On one side, Old Cairo,

Cairo, the water-works, and pleasure houses of the Beys, are seen; on the other, the pleasant town of Giza, where there is a manufactory of sal-ammoniac. The governor who resides here exacts a tax from those who visit the pyramids out of curiosity.

Lost in agreeable meditation, I entered a grove of tamarind, orange, and sycamore trees, and enjoyed the fresh air beneath their thick foliage. A luminous ray here and there penetrated the deep shades, gilding a small part of the scene. Plants and flowers scented the air, multitudes of doves flew from tree to tree, undisturbed at my approach. Thus abandoned to the delights of contemplation, and indulging those delicious sensations the time and place inspired, I uncautiously proceeded towards the thickest part of the wood; when a terrifying voice suddenly exclaimed—Where are you going? Stand, or you are dead.—It was a slave who guarded the entrance of the grove, that no rash curiosity might disturb the females who reposed upon the verdant banks. I instantly turned back, happy in not having been known to be a European. I afterwards understood

stood the Beys go there sometimes with their Harem, (r) and that any over inquisitive stranger, who should wander there at such a time, would risk the immediate loss of his head. You perceive, Sir, how necessary circumspection is in a country where the least indiscretion may lead to death.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(r) This name is given to the apartment of the women, but it is also used to signify the women themselves.

LETTER X.

Of Heliopolis, the ancient city of the Sun: the state in which it was when Strabo wrote. Of the obelisk of granite still standing: the balsam-scrub of Mecca, which was transplanted by a Pacha; and the fountain named Matar Ain, fresh water, which the Copts hold in great veneration, believing that the Holy Virgin came thither with her son.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

WHILE describing the environs of the city, I ought not, Sir, to forget the ancient Heliopolis, (s) formerly famous, for cultivating the higher branches of science, and the grandeur of its buildings. Geographers place it at some distance from the eastern angle of the Delta. Strabo (t) tells us it was built on a long slip of earth, raised by men, to secure it from inundation, and the

(s) i. e. The city of the sun.

(t) Lib. 17.

place he describes I found covered with ruins, two leagues north east of Grand Cairo, and three from the separation of the Nile.

Heliopolis possessed a temple of the Sun, where, in a particular enclosure the sacred ox was fed. This ox was adored here by the name of Mnevis, as he was at Memphis by that of Apis. The credulous people supposed it a god; the priests an animal most useful to agriculture, in a country where he assists in tillage, and afterwards in watering the earth, during six months of the year: (u) but as superstition was their gain, by procuring them offerings and rendering them the guardians of the oracles, they supported it with all their art.

The temple of the Sun was not the only one at Heliopolis; there was another, built in the old Egyptian stile (x) with sphinx avenues and stately obelisks before the principal entrance. Nothing could have a finer effect than the colossal figures of marble, and

(u) When the waters of the Nile are low, oxen are employed to turn machines, with chain-buckets, which raise the water into reservoirs, whence it is dispersed over the grounds; for which reason this animal is preserved at its birth, and it is forbidden to kill a calf in Egypt.

(x) Strabo, lib. 17.

high

high pillars of a single stone, which were in front of the vestibule of Egyptian temples. While the astonished eye contemplated these marvellous works, the imagination read the history of the god adored there, and the prince who had raised such edifices, in the hieroglyphics with which they were overspread. The temples of Heliopolis were ruins in the time of Augustus. Strabo relates that the marks of the rage of Cambyses, who had attacked them with fire and sword, were every where seen. Two of the four obelisks which Sochis had erected in that city were carried to Rome, (y) a third was destroyed by the Arabs, and the fourth remains on its pedestal. It is a single stone, brought from the Thebais, perfectly polished, sixty eight feet high above the base, and about six feet and a half square. The obelisk is in good preservation, except toward the south west, where the granite is chipped to a certain height, and its sides covered with hieroglyphics. This and one sphinx of yellowish marble, thrown in the dust, are the only remains of Heliopolis.

(y) Strabo, lib. 17.

There was formerly a college of priests here, which obtained no more mercy from the barbarous Cambyses than did the asylum of Mnevis, where for more than a thousand years they had made astronomical observations, and by their labours had calculated the solar year of three hundred and sixty five days and some minutes, which alone will prove the extent of their knowledge in this science. It was many years afterwards before the people of Europe could exactly determine the solar year; and Julius Cæsar, wishing to reform the Roman kalender, was obliged to employ an astronomer of Alexandria.

At Heliopolis Herodotus was chiefly instructed in the sciences, and Egyptian mysteries; which were no other than those profound branches of knowledge they thought prudent to conceal from the people under the veil of religion, and preserved to themselves by writing them in hieroglyphics, which themselves only understood. Enlightened by what he learnt from them, and endued with an observing mind, this father of history was crowned at the Olympic games, and the nine books he composed were worthy the name

name of the nine muses which they bore. And yet how many people, who have either not read him enough, or not at all, have dared to criticise and call him fabulous. For my own part, suspending my judgment on the remainder of his history, I only can estimate the worth of what he says concerning Egypt, and with the utmost satisfaction I have found the manners and customs he appropriates to this country; except with such slight modifications as changes of government and religion must necessarily have introduced. As to the monuments he has described, what remains proves he has not exaggerated, and demonstrates the possibility of what is no more. Justice extorts this homage to a historian who, like Homer, was the painter of nations.

Heliopolis has not only the glory of having instructed Herodotus, but also of having taught philosophy to Plato, (z) who, from the sublimity of his doctrine, has obtained the name of Divine. In this city, Eudoxus too past thirteen years, in the priests school, and became the most famous astronomer of his time. What now remains of all her

(z) Strabo, lib. 17.

monuments and all her sciences? A barbarous Persian has overthrown her temples, a fanatic Arab burnt her books, and one solitary obelisk, overlooking her ruins, says to passengers, THIS ONCE WAS HELIOPOLIS!

At a little distance is the small village of *Mataree*, (a) so called because it has a fresh water spring, and the only one in Egypt. Probably the stratum through which the waters of the Nile are filtered, in coming to this spring, does not possess the nitrous quality, so common to this country. Tradition has rendered it famous, which says that the holy family, flying from Herod, came here; and that the virgin bathed the child Jesus in this fountain. The Christians relate many miracles performed here, and come with great devotion to drink its waters, for the cure of their diseases; the very Mahometans partake of their veneration.

In this village was an enclosure where slips of the balsam shrub, brought from Mecca by a Pacha, were cultivated. When cut like the vine, precious drops were caught, well

(a) Named *Mataree* by the Arabs, otherwise *Ain Shams*, fountain of the sun, because it is near the scite of Heliopolis.

known in pharmacy, and which the eastern women used to give freshness to the complexion, and fortify the stomach. These shrubs, a foot and a half high, have slight shoots, and leaves like those of rue. Belon, who saw them when he was at Grand Cairo, enumerated nine; he dried one of the slips, and proved it to be the plant known by the name of *xylon balsamum*, or balm of Gilead, which the caravans bring from Mecca. Its colour he says is reddish, with an inner bark of beautiful green; it has an odour which partakes of frankincense, the leaf of the *terebinthus*, or turpentine tree, and wild savory; and, when rubbed between the fingers, is aromatic, like the scent of the *cardamomum*. This precious plant is lost to Egypt, where the Pachas do not stay long enough to think of any thing but the interest of the moment. It was not to be found when M. Maillet was consul at Grand Cairo, and at present is scarcely remembered.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R X L

The hot baths used over all Egypt, and the manner of bathing, described; with observations on the benefits arising from them; on the practice of the women who bathe once or twice a week, and comparisons between these baths and those of the ancient Greeks.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE hot baths, Sir, known in the remotest ages, and celebrated by Homer, who paints the manners of his times, have here preserved all their allurements and salubrity; necessity has rendered them common in a country where perspiration is abundant; and pleasure has preserved the practice. Mahomet, who knew their utility, has made the use of them a religious precept. They have been superficially described by most travellers; but as the habit I am in of frequenting them has given me leisure to examine them attentively, I shall endeavour

endeavour to be more particular and satisfactory. (b)

The first apartment, at entering the bath, is a great chamber, in the form of a rotunda, with an open roof, to let the pure air circulate freely. A spacious alcove, carpeted, is carried round, and divided into compartments, in which the bathers leave their clothes. In the centre is a fountain, which plays into a reservoir, and has a pleasing effect.

When undressed, a napkin is tied round the middle; sandals are put on, and a narrow passage is entered, where the heat first begins to be felt; the door shuts, and, twenty paces further, a second opens, which is the entrance to a passage at right angles with the first. Here the heat augments, and those who fear to expose themselves too suddenly to its effects stop some time, in a marble hall, before they enter. The bath itself is a spacious vaulted chamber, paved and lined with marble; beside it are four small rooms: a vapour continually rises from a fountain and cistern of hot

(b) I have seen the baths of the principal cities of Egypt; they are all made on the same plan, seldom differing, except in size; thus an exact description of one will include the others.

water, with which the burnt perfumes mingle. (c)

The bathers are not, as in France, imprisoned in a kind of tub, where the body cannot rest at its ease ; but, reclining on a spread sheet, and the head supported on a small pillow, they freely take what posture they please, while clouds of odoriferous vapours envelop and penetrate every pore.

Having repos'd thus some time, a gentle moisture diffuses itself over the body ; a servant comes, gently presses and turns the bather, and, when the limbs are flexible, makes the joints crack without trouble ; then *masses*, (d) and seems to knead the body without giving the slightest sensation of pain.

This done he puts on a stuff glove and continues rubbing long, and freeing the skin of the patient, which is quite wet, from every kind of scaly obstruction, and all imperceptible particles that clog the pores, till it becomes as smooth as satin ; he then conducts the bather into a cabinet, pours a lather of perfumed soap on the head, and retires.

(c) Perfumes are only burnt when it is the desire of the persons bathing. By mingling with the vapour they produce a most agreeable effect.

(d) *Masser* comes from the Arabic verb *masses*, which signifies to touch lightly.

The ancients honoured their guests still more, and treated them after a more voluptuous manner. While Telemachus was at the court of Nestor, (*e*) “ The beauteous Polycaste, youngest of the daughters of the king of Pylos, led the son of Ulysses to the bath, washed him with her own hands, and, having rubbed his body with precious ointments, clothed him in rich garments and a shining mantle.” Nor were Pistratus and Telemachus worse treated in the palace of Menelaus, (*f*) the beauties of which having admired, “ they were conducted to marble basons, in which the bath was prepared, where beauteous slaves washed them, rubbed them with odorous oils, and clothed them in fine garments, and magnificent furred robes.” (*g*)

(*e*) *Odyssey*, Book III.

(*f*) *Odyssey*, Book IV.

(*g*) I translate the words *χλωτας; βολας;* (shaggy mantles) furred robes, though I am sensible no translator has so rendered them, because it seems to me the poet intended to describe a custom which still remains, in the East, of covering the bather with furred garments, when he leaves the hot bath, to prevent a stoppage of perspiration, at a time when the pores are exceedingly open.

The room into which the bather retires has two water cocks, one for cold, the other for hot water; and he washes himself. The attendant presently returns with a depilatory pomatum, (*b*) which instantly eradicates hair wherever applied. It is in general use both with men and women in Egypt.

Being well washed and purified, the bather is wrapped up in hot linen, and follows his guide through various windings which lead to the outward apartment, while this insensible transition from heat to cold prevents all inconvenience. (*i*) Being come to the alcove, a bed is ready prepared, on which the person no sooner lies down than a boy comes, and begins to press with his delicate hands all parts of the body, in order to dry them perfectly: the linen is once more changed,

(*b*) Made from a mineral called *rufma*, of a dark brown colour. The Egyptians give it a slight burning, then add an equal quantity of slack lime, and knead them up with water. This grey paste will make the hair fall off in three minutes, without giving the slightest pain.

(*i*) Delicate people stop some time in the chamber next the bath, that they may feel no inconvenience by going too suddenly into the air. The pores being exceedingly open, they keep themselves warm all day, and, in winter, stay within doors.

and

and the boy gently rubs the callous skin of the feet with pumice stone, then brings a pipe and Moka coffee. (k)

Coming from a bath filled with hot vapour, in which excessive perspiration bedewed every limb, into a spacious apartment, and the open air, the lungs expand, and respire pleasure: well kneaded, and, as it were, regenerated, the blood circulates freely, the body feels a voluptuous ease, a flexibility till then unknown, a lightness as if relieved from some enormous weight, and the man almost fancies himself newly born, and beginning first to live. A glowing consciousness of existence diffuses itself to the very extremities; and, while thus yielding to the most delightful sensations, ideas of the most pleasing kind prevail and fill the soul; the imagination wanders through worlds which itself embellishes, every where drawing pictures of happiness and delight. If life be only a succession of ideas, the vigour, the rapidity, with which the memory then retraces all the knowledge

(k) The whole expence of bathing thus to me was half a crown; but the common people go simply to perspire in the bath, wash themselves, and give three half-pence or two-pence at departing.

of the man, would lead us to believe that the two hours of delicious calm, which succeed bathing, are an age.

Such, Sir, are these baths, the use of which was so strongly recommended by the ancients, and the pleasures of which the Egyptians still enjoy. Here they prevent or exterminate rheumatisms, catarrhs, and those diseases of the skin which the want of perspiration occasions. Here they find a radical cure for that fatal disease which attacks the powers of generation, and the remedies for which are so dangerous in Europe. (1) Here they rid themselves of those uncomfortable sensations so common among other nations, who have not the same regard to cleanliness.

The women are passionately fond of these baths, whither they go at least once a week, taking with them slaves accustomed to the

(1) Tournefort, who had taken the vapour bath at Constantinople, where they are much less careful than at Grand Cairo, thinks they injure the lungs; but longer experience would have convinced him of his error. There are no people who practise this bathing more than the Egyptians, nor any to whom such diseases are less known. They are almost wholly unacquainted with pulmonic complaints.

Office.

office. More sensual than men, after the usual process they wash the body, and particularly the head, with rose-water. There their attendants braid their long black hair, with which, instead of powder and pomatum, they mingle precious essences. There they blacken the rim of the eye-lid, arch the brows with *cobel*, (m) and stain the nails of their hands and feet of a golden yellow with *benna*. (n) Their linen and their robes have been past through the sweet vapour of aloes wood, and, their dressing ended, they remain in the outward apartment, and pass the day in feasting, while singing girls come and dance, and sing soothing airs, or recount amorous adventures.

The days of bathing are festive days among the Egyptian women; they deck themselves magnificently, and, under the long veil and mantle which hide them from the public eye, wear the richest stuffs. They undress themselves in presence of each other, and

(m) Tin, burnt with gall-nuts, which the Turkish women use to blacken, and arch, the eye-brows.

(n) A shrub, common in Egypt, which bears some resemblance to the privet. The leaves, chopped and applied to the skin, give it a bright yellow colour.

their vanity extends to their very drawers, which in winter are made of stuffs inwove *with silk and gold, and in summer of worked muslin.* Ruffles and lace are unknown to them, but their shifts are made of cotton and silk, as light and transparent as gauze. Rich sashes of Cassimire (o) bind up their floating robes, and two crescents of fine pearls sparkle amidst the black hair that shades their temples; while diamonds enrich the Indian handkerchief with which they bind their brows. Such are the Georgians and Circassians, whom the Turks purchase for their wives. They are neat to excess, and walk in an atmosphere of perfumes; and, though their luxury is hidden from the public, it surpasses that of the European women, in their own houses.

The excessive jealousy of the Turks makes them pretend that, in this warm climate, where nature is so powerful, and women are irresistibly prone to pleasure, an inter-

(o) The wool of Cassimire is the finest in the world, surpassing silk itself. The sashes made from it cost about five-and-twenty pounds each; they are usually embroidered at both ends, and, though three French ells long, and one wide, may be drawn through a ring.

course

course between the sexes would be dangerous ; they therefore abuse the right of *strength, and hold them in slavery, though* they thereby increase the violence of their passions, and make them ready to seize the first opportunity of retaliation : ignorant, no doubt, that, though free women may be won, slaves need no winning.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XII.

Farther accounts of the Egyptians, their private lives, food, occupations, amusements, inclinations, morals, and the manner in which they receive visitors.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

LIFE, Sir, at Grand Cairo is rather passive than active. (p) Nine months in the year the body is oppressed by heat; the soul, in a state of apathy, far from being continually tormented by a wish to know and act, sighs after calm tranquillity. Inaction, under a temperate climate, is painful; here, repose is enjoyment. The most frequent salutation, at meeting or parting, is, *Peace be with you.* (q) Effeminate indolence is born with the Egyptian,

(p) From March to November the thermometer constantly rises from 23 to 36 degrees; in the other months it seldom descends lower than the ninth degree above the freezing point.

(q) Thus the Orientals salute each other. The Christian religion, which owes its origin to Asia, has borrowed

Egyptian, grows as he grows, and descends with him to the grave: it is the vice of the climate; it influences his inclinations, and governs his actions. The sofa, therefore, is the most luxurious piece of furniture of an apartment. Their gardens have charming arbours, and convenient seats, but not a single walk. The Frenchman, born under an ever varying sky, is continually receiving new impressions, which keep his mind as continually awake; he is active, impatient, and agitated like the atmosphere in which he exists; while the Egyptian, feeling the same heat, the same sensation, two thirds of the year, is idle, solemn, and patient.

He rises with the sun to enjoy the morning air, purifies himself, and repeats the appointed prayer. (r) His pipe and coffee are brought him, and he reclines at ease on his sofa. Slaves, with their arms crossed, remain silent at the far end of the chamber, with their eyes fixed on him, seeking to an-
rowed the phrase. The priests, in the time of communion, at festivals, salute each other with—*Peace be with you.*

(r) “ Oh, believers! before ye pray, wash your “ face, your hands, and arms up to the elbows, wipe “ yourselves from head to foot.” *Koren.*

ticipate

ticipate his smallest want. His children, standing in his presence, unless he permits them to be seated, preserve every appearance of tenderness and respect: he gravely caresses them, gives them his blessing, and sends them back to the Harem. (s) He only questions, and they reply with modesty. He is the chief, the judge, the pontiff of the family, before whom these sacred rights are all respected.

Breakfast ended, he transacts the business of his trade, or his office; and as to disputes they are few, among a people where the voice of the hydra chicanery is never heard; where the name of attorney is unknown; where the whole code of laws consists in a few clear and precise commands, delivered in the Koran; and where each man is his own pleader.

When visitors come, the master receives them without many compliments, but with an endearing manner; his equals are seated beside him, with their legs crossed; which

(s) Harem is an Arabic word, signifying forbidden place. It is the apartment of the women, improperly, by us, called Seraglio.

posture is not fatiguing to the body, unembarrassed by dress. His inferiors kneel, and sit upon their heels. People of distinction are placed on a raised sofa, whence they overlook the company. Thus Eneas, (*t*) in the palace of Dido, had the place of honour, while, seated on a raised bed, he related the burning of Troy to the queen. When every person is placed, the slaves bring pipes and coffee, and set the perfume brasier in the middle of the chamber, the air of which is impregnated with its odours ; and afterward present sweetmeats, and sherbet.

The tobacco smoked in Egypt is brought from Syria, in leaf, and cut by them into long filaments, it is not so acrid as that of America ; and, to render it more agreeable, they mix with it the odorous wood of aloes. Their pipes are usually of jasmin, the end garnished with amber, and often enriched with precious stones : they are very long, and

the

(*t*) *Inde vero pater Æneas sic orsus ab alto.* Eneid lib. II.

The epithet *pater*, which Virgil bestows on Æneas, proves this great poet intimately acquainted with oriental manners, among whom the title of Father is the most honourable they can bestow ; they are proud of it still,

the vapour imbibed is, therefore, mild, (u) The Orientals pretend it agreeably irritates the palate, while it gratifies the smell. The rich smoke in lofty rooms, with a great number of windows, that give a thorough air.

When the visit is almost ended, a slave, bearing a silver plate, in which precious essences are burning, goes round to the company: each in turn perfumes the beard, and, afterward, sprinkles rose water on the head and hands. This is the last ceremony, and the guests are permitted then to retire. Thus, you see, Sir, the ancient custom, of perfuming the head and the beard, as sung by the royal prophet, (x) is not lost. Anacreon, the father of the festive ode, and the poet of the graces, incessantly repeats, “ I delight to sprinkle my body with precious perfumes, and crown my head with roses.” (y).

still, and, on the birth of a son, quit their own name, and call themselves *the Father of such a one.*

(u) There are pipes fifteen feet long, and they are commonly five or six.

(x) Like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard; even Aaron’s beard. Ps. 133.

(y) Anacreon, Ode XV

About noon the table is prepared, and the viands brought, in a large tray of tinned copper; and, though not great variety, there is great plenty. In the centre is a mountain of rice cooked with poultry, and highly seasoned with spice and saffron. Round this are hashed meats, pigeons, sluffed cucumbers, delicious melons, and fruits. The roast meats are cut small, laid over with the fat of the animal, seasoned with salt, spitted, and done on the coals; it is tender and succulent. The guests seat themselves on a carpet, round the table; a slave brings water, in one hand, and a basin in the other, to wash. This is an indispensable ceremony, where each person puts his hand in the dish, and where the use of forks is unknown; it is repeated when the meal is ended. The customs of the East appear to be very ancient.

Menelaus, and the beauteous Helen, having loaded Telemachus and Pisistratus with gifts, gave them a hospitable banquet.

“ And now when through the royal dome they pass’d,
“ High on a throne the King each stranger plac’d.
“ A golden ew’er th’ attendant damsel brings,
“ Replete with water from the crystal springs,

“ With

“ With copious streams the shining vase supplies
 “ A silver laver, of capacious size.
 “ They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 “ The glitt’ring canisters are crown’d with bread :
 “ Viands of various kinds allure the taste
 “ Of choicest sort and favour, rich repast !” (z)

The manner in which the son of Thetis received the Greek deputies, very much resembled that in which the Egyptians treat their guests.

Achilles starting, as the chiefs he spy’d,
 Leap’d from his seat—
 —The chiefs beneath his roof he led,
 And plac’d in seats (a) with purple carpets spread.
 ——“ Patroclus o’er the blazing fire
 “ Heaps in a brazen vase three chines entire :
 “ The brazen vase Automedon sustains,
 “ Which flesh of porket, sheep, and goat contains :
 “ Achilles at the genial feast presides,
 “ The parts transfixes, and with skill divides.
 “ Mean while Patroclus sweats the fire to raise ;
 “ The tent is brightned with the rising blaze :
 “ Then, when the languid flames at length subside,
 “ He strows a bed of glowing embers wide,
 “ Above the coals the smoaking fragments turns,
 “ And sprinkles sacred salt from lifted urns ;
 “ With bread the glitt’ring canisters they load,
 “ Which round the board Menoetius’ son bestow’d ;

(z) Pope’s *Odyssey*, book XV.

(a) The French reads “ beds of repose” and the author adds, in a note, “ These were sofas of the Orientals, which served them by turns as seats and beds.” T.

“ Himself

“ Himself oppos’d t’Ulysses full in fight,
 “ Each portion parts, and orders ev’ry rite.
 “ The first fat off’rings, to th’ immortals due,
 “ Amidst the greedy flames Patroclus threw ;
 “ Then each, indulging in the social feast, (b)
 “ His thirst and hunger soberly represt.” (c)

A poet of less genius than Homer would have supposed his sublime descriptions disfigured by such minutiae; but how inestimable are they to us! How do they teach us the simplicity of ancient manners! A simplicity lost to Europe, but still existing in the East.

After dinner, the Egyptians retire to the harem, where they slumber some hours amidst their wives and children. A commodious and agreeable place of repose is luxury to them. Thus Mahomet, who neglected nothing that might seduce, acquainted with the wants and inclinations of men, tells them “ the inhabitants of paradise enjoy the sweets of repose, and have a place most delightful to sleep in at noon.” (d).

(b) The French again reads “ laid hands on the viands;” and the author says in his note, “ No doubt they took it with their fingers, as is practised at present.” T.

(c) Pope’s Iliad, book IX.

(d) Coran, chap. XXV.

The poor, having neither sofa nor harem, lie down on the mat on which they have dined. Thus Jesus Christ, at the last supper, suffered his beloved disciple to repose his head upon his bosom (e).

It is customary in the evening, to go on the water, or breathe the fresh air on the banks of the Nile, beneath the orange and sycamore shades. An hour after sun-set supper is served, consisting of rice, poultry, vegetables, and fruits, which are very salutary during the heats: the stomach requires these, and would reject more solid food. Moderation in eating is the virtue of the climate.

Such is the ordinary life of the Egyptians. Our shews, plays, and pleasures, are to them unknown; a monotony which, to a European, would be death, is delight to an Egyptian. Their days are past in repeating the same thing, in following the same customs, without a wish or a thought beyond. Having neither strong passions, nor ardent hopes, their minds know not lassitude: this is a torment reserved for those who, unable

to moderate the violence of their desires, or satisfy their unbounded wants, are weary every where, and exist only where they are not.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XIII.

The paternal authority of the ancient patriarchs perfectly preserved in Egypt: the manner in which the father of a family governs his children, and the respect paid to age.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

HISTORY places the infancy of human nature in the East; here paternal authority began, and here its rights are still preserved. A father enjoys all the titles nature bestows; the head, the judge, the pontiff, he commands his family, terminates their differences, and offers up the sacrifices of the *Courban Beiram.* (f) Each family forms a small state, of

(f) A Mahometan festival, when each father of a family offers up a sacrifice, proportionate to his means. The rich immolate sheep and oxen; the poor obey the command, by cutting the throat of a pigeon. This feast, held solemn by the Mahometans, happens six weeks after the Ramadan, and recalls to mind the Jewish passover.

Mahomet, unable to abolish sacrifices, divinely authorized in the East, recommends them in the chapter of the

of which the father is king; the members of it, attached to him by the ties of blood, acknowledge and submit to his power. Before his tribunal their disputes are brought, and his sentence, terminating them, restores peace and order. The eldest holds the sceptre, experience is his guide, except in what regards his household regulation, in which he follows the law that custom prescribes.

The children are educated in the women's apartment, and do not come into the hall, especially when strangers are there. Young people are silent when in this hall; if men grown they are allowed to join the conversation: but when the Sheik (*g*) begins to speak they cease, and attentively listen; if he enters an assembly, all rise: they give him way in public, and every where shew him esteem and respect. In the time of Herodotus

the Pilgrimage of Mecca; but, that he might sanctify a custom idolatry had corrupted, he commanded the invocation of God over the slain animal, and added these remarkable words, “God accepts neither the flesh “ nor blood of victims, but is pleased with the piety of “ those who sacrifice them.” *Coran.*

(*g*) This title, which signifies elder, is given to the most ancient of the family; and, also, to those who appertain to the law.

these manners subsisted in Egypt, (*b*) and the despotism under which it groans serves to preserve them. The neck of its inhabitants bows beneath a yoke of iron. Publicly to display wealth would be criminal; whatever can excite the avarice of its tyrants is carefully concealed, and there is a fear even of seeming fortunate. Within the family walls, only, tranquillity and happiness are to be found; and, as the union of its branches gives safety, the common interest joins with brotherly love to maintain harmony. The sacred laws of nature, in their primitive purity, are here observed. A numerous posterity often resides under the same roof; the children and grandchildren come and pay their common father a daily tribute of veneration and love: the pleasure of being beloved and respected, in proportion as age increases, makes him forget he grows old; the content of his heart sparkles in his eyes, and serenity smooths the wrinkles of his forehead;

(*b*) Like the Lacedæmonians, who are the only people among the Greeks that pay proper homage to old age, the Egyptians give way to those who are older than themselves, and rise from their seats when they enter. Herodotus. Euterpe.

he is cheerful and jocular ; and, while his youthful descendants wear the most modest garments, he is decked in the gayest colours. (*i*) Happy in the bosom of his family, when on the borders of the grave, he perceives not the approach of death, and reclines to everlasting rest amidst the embraces of his children. Long do they mourn his loss, and each week strew his tomb with flowers, (*k*) where they recite their funeral hymns. The Egyptians have lost the art of embalming, but not the feelings which gave it birth.

Among polished nations, where the family is more separated, age is not so much respected ; nay, it is often disgraceful. The silver haired Sire is often obliged to be silent, in presence of haughty youth ; or assume the manners of a boy, to become supportable. In proportion as the burthen of time is felt, and the pleasures of life diminish, he beholds himself an incumbrance even

(*i*) The brightest colours are reserved for the aged, in Egypt, and the youth of corrupted manners, only, are audacious enough to wear sumptuous habits.

(*k*) To strew odiferous plants over, and recite prayers at, the tomb of relations is a custom in Egypt.

to those who, but for him, had never been. They refuse him consolation when he needs it most, and shut him from their hearts: the cold hand of age withers his faculties, which the kindly flame of filial love warms not. In such nations, the grey haired, feeling father, dies long before he is carried to the grave.

Let us draw a veil over a picture which, thank heaven, is not universal. I was impelled to make the parallel by the affecting scenes I here each day witness, where the reverend patriarch, with his beard floating on his breast, smiles in frigid age, on his grandchildren, who approach him with their caresses. He beholds four generations eager to pay him all filial duty, and his heart expands; he delights in life to its last moment. Yes, Sir, these people have, in ignorance, preserved the simplicity of ancient manners; they know not our arts and sciences, but the sweetest sensations of nature, which books teach not, they know, revere, and enjoy.

What I have said might be supported by a thousand examples. I will select only one which is well known. When M. Maillet was Consul (¹) at Grand Cairo, the Jesuits

(1) About a hundred years ago.

persuaded the court of France to send for Coptic children to Paris, (m) and there educate them in the Catholic faith, that they might return and convert their heretical nation. Money and promises obtained the consent of some fathers, extremely poor; but, when the time of separation came, paternal tenderness revived in all its force, and they rather chose to remain wretched than to purchase ease by a sacrifice too painful to the heart.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(m) Copts are the ancient inhabitants of Egypt, and Jacobine Christians; I shall speak more fully of them hereafter.

LETTER XIV.

An account of the Almai, or Egyptian Improvisatore, their education, dancing, music, and the passionate delight the natives take in these actresses.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

EGYPT, Sir, as well as Italy, has her improvisatore, called Almai, or Learned; which title they obtain by being more carefully educated than other women. They form a class very famous in the country, to be admitted into which it is necessary to possess a fine voice, eloquence, the rules of grammar, (n) and be able to compose and sing extempore verses, adapted to the occasion. The Almai know all new songs by rote, their memory is stored with the

(n) The quantity in Arabic and Latin verses is the same, to which the former adds the various measure and rhyme of the French. These advantages cannot unite, except when a language is well fixed.

best

best *Moals* (o) and tales, they are present at all festivals, and are the chief ornament of banquets. They place them in a raised orchestra, or pulpit, where they sing during the feast, after which they descend, and form dances, which no way resemble ours. They are pantomimes, that represent the common incidents of life. Love is their usual subject. The suppleness of these

(o) Elegiac songs, which bewail the death of a hero, or the disasters of love. Abulfeda has preserved the conclusion of a moal, sung by Ommia, over the cavity in which his kinsmen had been thrown, after the defeat of Beder.

Have I yet not wept enough over the noble sons of the Princes of Mecca ?

I beheld their broken bones, and, like the turtle in the deep recess of the forest, filled the air with my lamentations.

Prostrate on earth, unfortunate mothers, mingle your sighs with my tears.

And ye, who follow their obsequies, sing dirges, ye wives, interrupted by your groans.

What happened to the princes of the people at Beder, the chiefs of tribes !

The aged and the youthful warrior, there, lay naked and lifeless.

How is the vale of Mecca changed ?

These desolate plains, these wildernesses, seem to partake my grief.

daneers bodies is inconceivable, and the flexibility of their features, which take impressions characteristic of the parts they play at will, astonishing. The indecency of their attitudes is often excessive ; each look, each gesture, speaks ; and in a manner so forcible as not possibly to be misunderstood. They throw aside modesty with their veils. When they begin to dance, a long and very light silk robe floats on the ground, negligently girded by a sash ; long black hair, perfumed, and in tresses, descends over their shoulders ; the shift, transparent as gauze, scarcely conceals the skin : as the action proceeds the various forms and contours, the body can assume seem progressive ; the sound of the flute, the castanets, the tambour de basque, and cymbals, regulate, increase, or slacken, their steps. Words, adapted to such like scenes, inflame them more, till they appear intoxicated, and become frantic bacchantes. Forgetting all reserve, they then wholly abandon themselves to the disorder of their senses, while an indelicate people, who wish nothing should be left to the imagination, redouble their applause.

These

These Almai are admitted into all harems; they teach the women the new airs, recount amorous tales, and recite poems, in their presence, which are interesting by being pictures of their own manners. They learn them the mysteries of their art, and instruct them in lascivious dances. The minds of these women are cultivated, their conversation agreeable, they speak their language with purity, and, habitually addicting themselves to poetry, learn the most winning and sonorous modes of expression. Their recital is very graceful; when they sing, nature is their only guide: some of the airs I have heard from them were gay, and in a light and lively measure, like some of ours; but their excellence is most seen in the pathetic. When they rehearse a moal, in the manner of the ancient tragic ballad, by dwelling upon affecting and plaintive tones, they inspire melancholy, which insensibly augments, till it melts in tears. The very Turks, enemies as they are to the arts, the Turks themselves, pass whole nights in listening to them. Two people sing together, sometimes, but, like their orchestra, they are always

always in unison: accompaniments, in music, are only for enlightened nations; who, *while melody charms the ear, wish to have* the mind employed by a just and inventive modulation. Nations, on the contrary, whose feelings are oftener appealed to than their understanding, little capable of catching the fleeting beauties of harmony, delight in those simple sounds which immediately attack the heart, without calling in the aid of reflection to increase sensibility.

The Israelites, to whom Egyptian manners, by long dwelling in Egypt, were become natural, also had their Almai. At Jerusalem, as at Cairo, it seems, they gave the women lessons. St. Mark relates a fact which proves the power of the Oriental dance over the heart of man. (p)

“ And when a convenient day was come,
“ that Herod on his birth-day made a
“ supper to his lords, high captains, and
“ chief estates of Galilee;
“ And when the daughter of the said

(p) St. Mark, chap. vi. ver. 21.

“ Herodias

“ Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, “ Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

“ And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

“ And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask, and she said, The head of John the Baptist.

“ And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, “ I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

“ And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought, and he went and beheaded him in the prison.”

The Almai are present at marriage ceremonies, and precede the bride, playing on instruments. They also accompany funerals, at which they sing dirges, utter groans and lamentations, and imitate every mark of grief and despair. Their price is high,

high, and they seldom attend any but wealthy peoples, and great lords.

I was lately invited to a splendid supper, which a rich Venetian merchant gave the receiver-general of the finances of Egypt. The Almai sung various airs, during the banquet, and afterwards the praises of the principal guests. I was most pleased by an ingenious allegory, in which Cupid was the supposed interlocutor. There was play after supper, and I perceived handfuls of sequins were occasionally sent to the singers. This festival brought them fifty guineas, at least; they are not, however, always so well paid.

The common people have their Almai, also, who are a second order of these women, imitators of the first; but have neither their elegance, grace, nor knowledge. They are seen every where; the public squares and walks round Grand Cairo abound with them; the populace require ideas to be conveyed with still less disguise; decency therefore will not permit me to describe the licentiousness of their motions and postures, of which no idea can be formed

formed but by seeing. The Indian *Bayaderes* are exemplarily modest, when compared to the dancing girls of the Egyptians. This, Sir, is the principal diversion of these people, and in which they greatly delight.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XV.

The private life of the Egyptian women, their inclinations, morals, employments, pleasures, the manner in which they educate their children, and their custom of weeping over the tombs of their kindred, after having strewed them with flowers and odoriferous plants.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE already, Sir, described the mode of life of the men, but have said little concerning that of the women. This Oriental reserve will not please a European; (q) I will, therefore, endeavour to give you a general idea of female manners, in this country.

(q) The Egyptians never mention their wives in conversation; or, if obliged to speak of them, they say the mother of such a person, the mistress of the house, &c. Good manners will not permit the visitor to ask, How does your wife do, Sir? But, in imitation of their reserve, it is necessary to say, How does the mother of such a person do? And this they think an insult unless asked by a kinsman, or an intimate friend. This I relate as perfectly characteristic of Eastern jealousy.

Ia

In Europe, women act parts of great consequence, and often reign sovereigns on the world's vast theatre; they influence manners and morals, and decide on the most important events; the fate of nations is frequently in their hands. How different in Egypt, where they are bowed down by the fetters of slavery, condemned to servitude, and have no influence in public affairs. Their empire is confined within the walls of the harem. There are their graces and charms entombed: the circle of their life extends not beyond their own family and domestic duties. (r)

Their first care is to educate their children, and a numerous posterity is their most fervent wish; public respect and the love of their husband are annexed to fruitfulness. This is even the prayer of the poor, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow; and, did not adoption alleviate grief, when nature is unkind, a barren woman would be inconsolable. The mother daily suckles her child,

† (r) The compiler Pomponius Mela pretends women do the out-door business, in Egypt, and men that of the household. Every writer who has been in this country disproves the opinion.

whose infant smiles, added to frequent pregnancy, recompences all the cares and pains they incurred. Milk diseases, and those maladies which dry up the juices of the youthful wife, who sends her offspring to be nurtured by a stranger, are here unknown. That mothers should suckle their young is a law as ancient as the world ; it is expressly commanded by Mahomet. “ Let mothers suckle their children full two years, if the child does not quit the breast ; but she shall be permitted to wean it with the consent of her husband.” (s) Ulysses, in the Elysian fields, beholds his mother, his tender mother, there, who had fed him with her milk and nurtured him in infancy. (t)

When obliged by circumstances to take a nurse, they do not treat her as a stranger ; she becomes one of the family, and passes her days amidst the children she has suckled, by whom she is cherished and honoured as a second mother.

Racine, who possessed not only genius but all the knowledge necessary to render genius conspicuous, stored with the learning of the finest works of Greece, and well acquainted with oriental manners, gives Phœdra her

(s) Coran.

(t) Odyssey, book xxiii.
nurse

nurse as her sole confidante. The wretched queen, infected by a guilty passion she could not conquer, while the fatal secret oppressed a heart that durst not unload itself, could not resolve to speak her thoughts to the tender OEnone, till the latter had said

Cruelle, quand ma foi vous a-t-elle déçue ?

Songez-vous, qu'en naissant, mes bras vous ont réçue ?

When, cruel queen, by me were you deceived ?

Did I not first receive you in these arms ?

The harem is the cradle and school of infancy. The new-born feeble being is not there swaddled and filleted up in a swathe, the source of a thousand diseases. Laid naked on a mat, exposed in a vast chamber to the pure air, he breathes freely, and with his delicate limbs sprawls at pleasure. The new element in which he is to live is not entered with pain and tears. Daily bathed beneath his mother's eye, he grows apace ; free to act, he tries his coming powers, rolls, crawls, rises, and, should he fall, cannot much hurt himself, on the carpet, or mat, which covers the floor. (u)

(u) The rooms are paved with large flag stones, washed once a week, and covered in summer with a reed mat, of artful workmanship, and a carpet in winter.

He is not banished his father's house when seven years old, and sent to college with the loss of health and innocence ; he does not, tis true, acquire much learning ; he perhaps can only read and write ; but he is healthy, robust, fears God, respects old age, has filial piety, and delights in hospitality ; which virtues, continually practised in his family, remain deeply engraven in his heart.

The daughter's education is the same. Whalebone and busks, which martyr European girls, they know not ; they run naked, or only covered with a shift, till six years old, and the dress they afterwards wear confines none of their limbs, but suffers the body to take its true form, and nothing is more uncommon than ricketty children, and crooked people. Man rises in all his majesty, and woman displays every charm of person, in the East. In Georgia and Greece, those fine marking outlines, those admirable forms, which the Creator gave the chief of his works are best preserved. Apelles would still find models worthy of his pencil there.

The care of their children does not wholly employ the women ; every other domestic concern is theirs : they overlook their household,

hold, and do not think themselves debased by preparing, themselves, their own food, and that of their husbands. Former customs, still subsisting, render these cares duties. Thus Sarah hastened to bake cakes upon the hearth, when angels visited Abraham, who performed the rights of hospitality. Menelaus thus entreats the departing Telemachus :—

“ Yet stay, my friends, and in your chariot take
 “ The noblest presents that our love can make :
 “ Mean-time, commit we to our women’s care
 “ Some choice domestic viands to prepare ; (x)

Subject to the immutable laws by which custom governs the East, the women do not associate with men, not even at table, (y) where the union of sexes produces mirth, and wit, and makes food more sweet. When the great incline to dine with one of their wives, she is informed, prepares the apartment, perfumes it with precious essences, procures the most delicate viands, and receives her lord with the utmost attention and respect. Among the common people, the women usually stand, or sit in a corner of the room, while the husband dines, often hold the bason

(x) Pope’s *Odyssey*, book xv.

(y) Sarah, who prepared the dinner for Abraham and his guests, sat not at table, but remained in her tent.

for him to wash, and serve him at table. (z) Customs like these, which the Europeans rightly call barbarous, and exclaim against with justice, appear so natural here, that they do not suspect it can be otherwise elsewhere. Such is the power of habit over man : what for ages has been he supposes a law of nature.

Though thus employed, the Egyptian women have much leisure, which they spend among their slaves, embroidering fashes, making veils, tracing designs to decorate their sofas, and in spinning. Such Homer painted the women of his times.

“ But not as yet the fatal news had spread
 “ To fair Andromache, of Hector dead ;
 “ As yet no messenger had told his fate,
 “ Nor e'en his stay without the Scœan gate.
 “ Far in the close recesses of the dome,
 “ Pensive she ply'd the melancholy loom ;
 “ A growing work employ'd her secret hours,
 “ Confus'dly gay with intermingled flow'rs.
 “ Her fair-hair'd handmaids heat the brazen urn,
 “ The bath preparing for her Lord's return : ” (a)

(z) I lately dined with an Italian, who had married an Egyptian woman, and assumed their manners, having lived here long. His wife and sister-in-law stood in my presence, and it was with difficulty I prevailed on them to sit at table with us, where they were extremely timid and disconcerted.

(a) Pope's Iliad, book xxii.

Telemachus,

Telemachus, seeing Penelope speak to the suitors on affairs to which he thought her incompetent, says

“ O royal mother ! ever-honoured name !
“ Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim
“ A son’s just right. No Grecian prince but I
“ Has pow’r this bow to grant, or to deny.
“ Of all that Ithaca’s rough hills contain,
“ And all wide Elis’ courser-breeding plain,
“ To me alone my father’s arms descend ;
“ And mine alone they are to give or lend.
“ Retire, oh Queen ! thy household task resume,
“ Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom ;
“ The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
“ These cares to man belong, and most to me.”

Pope’s *Odyssey*, book xxi.

The Queen, far from being offended at this freedom, retired, admiring the manly wisdom of her son.

Labour has its relaxations ; pleasure is not banished the harem. The nurse recounts the history of past times, with a feeling which her hearers participate ; cheerful and passionate songs are accompanied by the slaves, with the tambour de basque and castanets. Sometimes the Almai come, to enliven the scene with their dances, and affecting recitals, and by relating amorous romances ; and, at the close of the day, there is a repast, in which

exquisite

exquisite fruits and perfumes are served with profusion. Thus do they endeavour to charm away the dulness of captivity.

Not that they are wholly prisoners ; once or twice a week they are permitted to go to the bath, and visit female relations and friends. To bewail the dead is, likewise, a duty they are allowed to perform. I have often seen distraught mothers round Grand Cairo, reciting funeral hymns over the tombs they had strewed with odoriferous plants. Thus Hecuba and Andromache (*b*) lamented over the body of Hector ;

(*b*) I will insert the complaints of Andromache and Fatima, the daughters of Mahomet, that you, Sir, may compare them.

A N D R O M A C H E.

“ And, Oh my Hector ! Oh my Lord ! she cries,
 “ Snatch’d in thy bloom from these desiring eyes !
 “ Thou to the dismal realms for ever gone !
 “ And I abandon’d, desolate, alone !
 “ An only son, once comfort of our pains,
 “ Sad product now of hapless love remains !
 “ Never to manly age that son shall rise,
 “ Or with encreasing graces glad my eyes :
 “ For Ilion now, (her great defender slain)
 “ Shall sink a smoaking ruin on the plain.
 “ Who now protects her wives with guardian care ?
 “ Who saves her infants from the rage of war ?
 “ Now hostile fleets must waft those infants o’er,
 “ Those wives must waft ‘em to a foreign shore !

“ Thou

O N E G Y P T.

Hector; and thus Fatima and Sophia wept over Mahomet. This custom was not unknown to

“ Thou too, my son ! to barb’rous climes shall go,
“ The sad companion of thy mother’s woe ;
“ Driv’n hence a slave before the victor’s sword,
“ Condemn’d to toil for some inhuman lord.
“ Or else some Greek, whose father prest the plain,
“ Or son, or brother, by great Hector slain ;
“ In Hector’s blood his vengeance shall enjoy.
“ And hurl thee headlong from the tow’rs of Troy.
“ For thy stern father never spar’d a foe :
“ Thence all these tears, and all this scene of woe !
“ Thence, many evils his sad parents bore,
“ His parents many, but his consort more.
“ Why gav’st thou not to me thy dying hand ?
“ And why receiv’d not I thy last command ?
“ Some word thou would’st have spoke, which sadly dear,
“ My soul might keep, or utter with a tear ;
“ Which never, never could be lost in air,
“ Fix’d in my heart, and oft repeated there !
“ Thus to her weeping maids she makes her moan ;
“ Her weeping handmaids echo groan for groan.”

POPE’S ILIAD, book xxiv.

F A T I M A.

“ Oh my father ! Minister of the most high ! Pro-
“ phet of the most merciful God ! And art thou gone ?
“ With thee divine revelation is gone also ! The angel
“ Gabriel has, henceforth, for ever taken his flight into
“ the high heavens ! Power supreme ! hear my last
“ prayer ; hasten to unite my soul to his ; let me behold
“ his face ; deprive me not of the fruit of his righteous-
“ ness, nor of his intercession at the day of judgement.”

Them

to the Romans ; they had their funeral urns strewed with cypress. How charmingly does the elegant Horace shed flowers over that of Quinctilius ! How affecting, how passionate, is the ode he addresses to Virgil on the death of their common friend. (c) Among European

Then taking a little of the dust from the coffin, and putting it to her face, she adds,

“ Who, having smelt the dust of his tomb, can ever
 “ find odour in the most exquisite perfumes ! Alas !
 “ agreeable sensations are all extinct in my heart ! The
 “ clouds of sorrow envelop me, and will change the
 “ brightest day to dismal night ! ”

Vie de Mahomet, par Savary, page 235.

(c) “ Wherefore restrain the tender tear ?
 “ Why blush to weep for one so dear ?
 “ Sweet muse, of melting voice and lyre,
 “ Do thou the mournful song inspire.
 “ Quinctilius—sunk to endless rest,
 “ With death’s eternal sleep opprest !
 “ Oh ! when shall faith, of soul sincere,
 “ Of justice pure the sister fair,
 “ And modesty, unspotted maid,
 “ And truth in artless guise array’d,
 “ Among the race of human kind
 “ An equal to Quinctilius find ?
 “ How did the good, the virtuous mourn,
 “ And pour their sorrows o’er his urn ?
 “ But, Virgil, thine the loudest strain,
 “ Yet all thy pious grief is vain,

“ In

pean nations, where ties of kindred are much relaxed, they rid themselves all they can of the religious duties which ancient piety paid the dead ; but the reason why we die unregretted is because we have had the misfortune to live unbeloved.

The Egyptian women receive each other's visits very affectionately : when a lady enters the harem, the mistress rises, takes her hand, presses it to her bosom, kisses, and makes her sit down by her side ; a slave hastens to take her black mantle ; she is entreated to be at ease, quits her veil and her outward

“ In vain do you the gods implore
 “ Thy lov'd Quintilius to restore,
 “ Whom on far other terms they gave,
 “ By nature fated to the grave.
 “ What though you can the lyre command,
 “ And sweep its tones with softer hand
 “ Than Orpheus, whose harmonious song
 “ Once drew the listening trees along,
 “ Yet ne'er returns the vital heat
 “ The shadowy form to animate ;
 “ For when the ghost-compelling god
 “ Forms his black troops with horrid rod,
 “ He will not, lenient to the breath
 “ Of prayer, unbar the gates of death.
 “ 'Tis hard, but patience must endure,
 “ And soothe the woes it cannot cure.”

FRANCIS'S HORACE, ODE XXIV.

and

shift, (d) and discovers a floating robe, tied round the waist with a sash, which perfectly displays her shape. She then receives compliments according to their manner. (e) " Why my " mother, or my sister, have you been so long " absent ? We sighed to see you ! Your pre- " sence is an honour to our house ; it is the " happiness of our lives !" &c.

Slaves present coffee, sherbet, and confectionary ; they laugh, talk, and play ; a large dish is placed on the sofa, on which are oranges, pomegranates, bananas, and excellent melons. Water, and rose-water, mixed, are brought in a ewer ; and with them a silver basin to wash the hands, and loud glee and merry conversation season the meal. The chamber is perfumed by wood of aloes, in a brazier ; and, the repast ended, the slaves dance to the sound of cymbals, with whom the mistresses often mingle. At parting they several times repeat,

(d) A habit of ceremony, which covers the dress, and except the collar, greatly resembles a shift. It is thrown off, on sitting down, to be more at ease, and is called, in Arabic, *camis*.

(e) Such titles as madam, miss, or mistress, are unknown in Egypt. A woman advanced in years is called my mother ; when young, my sister ; and, if a girl, daughter of the house.

God keep you in health ! Heaven grant you a numerous offspring ! Heaven preserve your children ; the delight and glory of your family ! (f)

While a visitor is in the harem, the husband must not enter ; it is the asylum of hospitality, and cannot be violated without fatal consequences ; a cherished right, which the Egyptian women carefully maintain, being interested in its preservation. A lover, disguised like a woman, may be introduced into the forbidden place, (g) and it is necessary he should remain undiscovered ; death would otherwise be his reward. In this country, where the passions are excited by the climate, and the difficulty of gratifying them, love often produces tragical events.

The Turkish women go, guarded by their eunuchs, upon the water also, and enjoy the charming prospects of the banks of the Nile. Their cabins are pleasant, richly embellished, and the boats well carved and painted. They are known by the blinds over the windows,

(f) I mention these wishes, very ancient in the East, because they are found often in the Holy Scriptures.

(g) I have said *harem* signifies forbidden place.

and the music by which they are accompanied.

When they cannot go abroad they endeavour to be merry in their prison. Toward sun-setting they go on the terrace, and take the fresh air among the flowers which are there carefully reared. Here they often bathe; and thus, at once, enjoy the cool, limpid water, the perfume of odoriferous plants, the balmy air, and the starry host which shine in the firmament.

Thus Bathsheba bathed, when David beheld her from the roof of his palace. (b)

The Turks oblige the public criers to swear they will shut their eyes when they call the people to prayer, that their wives may not be seen from the high minarets. Another more certain precaution, which they take, is to choose the blind to perform this pious function.

Such, Sir, is the usual life of the Egyptian women. Their duties are to educate their children, take care of their household, and live retired with their family: their pleasures to visit, give feasts, in which they

(b) 1 Samuel, xi. 2.

often

often yield to excessive mirth and licentiousness, go on the water, take the air in orange groves, and listen to the Almai. They deck themselves as carefully to receive their acquaintance as French women do to allure the men. Usually mild and timid, they become daring and furious when under the dominion of violent love: neither locks nor grim keepers can then prescribe bounds to their passions; which, though death be suspended over their head, they search the means to gratify, and are seldom unsuccessful.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XVI.

Narrative of a love adventure, which happened at Rosetta.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THAT I may finish the portrait I have begun, I will relate a love adventure, Sir, which lately happened at Rosetta; and this will give you some idea of the strength of the passion in this country. Facts are better than arguments to shew the manners of a people. I shall be careful that no indecency shall pervade the picture; but, if the colours are glowing, the nature of the subject must plead my excuse.

Haffan, an old jealous Turk, had married a Georgian girl of sixteen, and appointed guards to watch her. But where is there guard so vigilant as love? This wealthy lord possessed fine lands near Rosetta; he had a magnificent garden a quarter of a league from the town, whither he permitted the youthful

ful Jemily, his wife, to go, and take the evening air. Slaves of both sexes always attended her. The men watched the walls, and stood sentinel at the gates ; the women waited on her within, where she languidly strayed among orange bowers. The murmuring streams, the fresh verdure, the tender plaints of the turtle doves, which people these asylums, but increased her melancholy. She plucked fruit, and eat, without appetite ; she gathered flowers, and smelt, without pleasure. As she was gravely walking one evening by the river side, veiled, and surrounded by her slaves, to go to her garden, she perceived a European, who lately had arrived at Rosetta. His dress being so different from the Turkish, made him remarkable. (i) The colours of youth were vivid on his cheeks, which were not yet tanned by the sun, and drew her attention. She passed slowly, and let her fan fall, that she might have a pretence to stop a moment. (k)

(i) Europeans dress as they please in Rosetta ; but there is danger in wandering from the city in the European habit.

(k) Their fans are of feathers, half circular, in a wooden handle.

Her eyes met his, and the look went to her heart; the air, the shape, the features of the stranger were imprinted in her memory; and the impossibility of speaking to, the dread of seeing him no more, gave her a painful sense of slavery. Thus constraint kindled momentary inclination into impetuous passion. Scarcely had she arrived, among the arbours of her garden, before she escaped from the crowd; and, taking one of her women aside, in whom she had most confidence, said, "Didst thou perceive the young stranger? Didst thou behold his bright eyes, and how he looked upon me? O, my friend! My dear Zetsa! Go, find him; tell him to walk, the day after to-morrow, among the orange groves, without the garden, beside the wood-of dates, where the wall is lowest. Say, I wish to see, to speak to him: only bid him shun the watchful eyes of my pitiless keepers."

The message was punctually delivered, and the European unguardedly promised; which promise the sight of approaching danger made him break. The slave, disguised as a tradeswoman, went a second time, and asked him why he had not kept his word. His excuses were

were various, and he fixed a distant time, that he might have leisure to reflect on consequences. Reflection again vanquished passion ; the sight of an impaled wretch cooled his fortitude, and he went not to the rendezvous.

Zetfa returned once more, bitterly reproached him, described how ardently her mistress loved him, and hated the old Hassan, praised her charms, her beauty, and lamented the misfortunes of a person stolen from her parents, and sold to a barbarian. The youth, seduced by her discourse, swore that, on the morrow, he would be under the arbour an hour after sun-set.

The beauteous Jemily, ever believing, though ever deceived, had been to the bath. Her black locks, a contrast to the pure white of her complexion, sprinkled with rose-water, hung in tresses that reached to the ground ; her robes were richly perfumed ; an embroidered sash shewed her slender waist, and bound these her light robes, which, having none of the stiffness of art, took the contour of her body. Her mantle and her veil were thrown aside ; an Indian handkerchief, adorned with pearls, encircled her head. Though

every grace of youth attended her, she still feared she was not beauteous enough. Impatiently she waited, sometimes hastening her steps, sometimes as suddenly stopping, and at others, extending herself on the ground, rolled among, and crushed, the tender flowers. The least noise made her shudder, and glance toward the appointed arbour. The sun was no more seen; the bright stars appeared, and night, here so delightful, so magnificent, whose cooling presence restores power to the languid body, and all its energy to the soul, had spread her veil over nature, and her dark shades over the bower where sighed the amorous Jemily. Each breath, each rustling leaf, brought fear and hope alternately to her heart. Suspence, that torturer of impatient love, gave her a thousand racking doubts.

The hour of returning came, and a third time she saw herself deceived. Fury takes place of affection; she breathes vengeance, determines to have the life of the perjuror; but, having more love than vanity, hope and desire soon extinguish wrath.—“No; he shall not die. Go, go, my dear Zetfa, bear him the words of peace; dispel his fears,

“ fears, describe my love, and bid him come
“ and learn its value.”

Zetfa returned to the European, calmed his apprehensions, and passionately described the tenderness of her mistress, and the happiness that awaited him. Incapable of withstanding pictures so seductive, the imprudent youth once more promised ; but, left to himself, the dread of an ignominious death once more made him violate his word. Patience itself has a period ; that of Jemily was long : nine months she solicited a man whom she had seen but a moment ; finding in affection new excuses ; one means failing, pursuing another ; still unable to submit to the loss of him she had taken so much pains to obtain. One evening, after shedding tears of bitterness, forgetting herself in the grove, and thinking only of her lover, whose image incessantly pursued her, Haffan, tired of waiting, treated her harshly. The charm was broken ; she retired, furious, to her apartment : but, though despairing Love breathed vengeance, yet the sentence he pronounced he softened. —“ Once more, go,” said she, to her faithful Zetfa ; “ to-morrow at day-break ; find the “ perfidious European, and bear him these

“ my last words.—I saw thee, stranger,
“ thought thou hadst sensibility, and my
“ heart panted to be thine. Nine months
“ thou hast deceived me ; perjury to thee is
“ sport. But, beware ; thy life is in my hands,
“ (m) and I am determined. Haffan will de-
“ part for Faoua on Thursday ; he will return
“ late, and I shall be in the garden. Come
“ and receive thy pardon, or a slave shall
“ bring me thy head. Jemily swears by
“ the Prophet, if longer neglected, to be
“ revenged.”

Zetfa faithfully reported these words, and the European hesitated no longer. Death, with promised pleasure, he preferred, made the slave a present, conjured her to calm the anger of Jemily, and faithfully promised he would be at the rendezvous a little after sunset. He was not, however, without his fears ; perhaps he was to be punished for former perfidies. Could a Turkish woman find pleasure in pardoning ; or does wounded pride forgive ? The day comes, and his fears encrease : a thousand wandering thoughts, a thousand sensations confound and distract his mind.—

(m) A Turkish woman may easily have a foreigner assassinated, or even publicly executed, if she please.

Depart

Depart he must, and the idea of a beauteous woman waiting for him enflamed the imagination, and veiled the danger. He armed himself, crossed the rice-fields, stole along the wood of dates, and came to the wall which divided him from the beauteous Georgian. His heart palpitates ; he looks, leaps the wall, and enters the garden. Two women, at seeing him, rise, and appear terrified, while he stands motionless. The one—it was Jemily herself—held out her hand, and gave him courage. He approaches, bows profoundly ; is kindly raised ; a sign is given, and the slave disappears. “Stranger,” said Jemily, “why hast thou deceived me so long ? Thou lovest me not.” “Pardon, beauteous Jemily ; my fears have detained me ; but I am come to repair my wrongs at your feet.” She seemed as if she would have continued her reproaches ; but, taking the youth’s hand, which trembled in her own, she led him to an orange grove. The moon-beams silvered the foliage.—But here, without further description, let us leave the lovers.

There seems little probability in an event like this, judging from European manners ; and I might easily have frenchified the story, and

and made it credible enough; but the world would only have gained one error more, would have said the Egyptians are like Europeans; without recollecting the immense difference of the licentious liberty of the sex in one place, and slavery, as licentious in its effects, in the other. I am more satisfied with relating fact, should it seem to want probability, than giving fable the appearance of truth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XVII.

Excursion from Grand Cairo to Giza, where the French merchants have a country house; the route from Giza to the Pyramids, and a table of their heights, extracted from ancient and modern travellers, proving the great pyramid is six hundred feet high; and that in the time of Herodotus, before the sand had accumulated round the base, its perpendicular height was eight hundred feet.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

YOU are surprised, Sir, I have not yet mentioned the pyramids, and expect a description that shall clear and determine your doubts. This is the very reason of my silence; my delay arose from the desire I had to obtain certainty, and such information as should satisfy your curiosity. One visit was not sufficient, and I am just returned from paying them a second, in company with the Comte D'Antragues, a French nobleman, whose desire of instruction brought him to Egypt, and who, in addition to the qualities we call amiable, possesses wit and learning.

We

We left Grand Cairo after dinner, proceeding through that part of it called Hanefi. The Nile was on our right, and the canal of the prince of the faithful on our left. The plain we crossed reaches to Fostat, and is intersected by lakes, clustering trees, gardens, and pleasure houses, appertaining to the grandees. The most considerable is that of Ibrahim Bey, Sheik El Balad, (o) whither he often takes his wives, who range in a vast enclosure of orange trees, and pomegranates, with a terrace, over which is a portico that looks down upon the river; here a part of their captivity is passed. A little farther a grand edifice rises, inhabited by dervices; and which, scandal says, affords subject of consolation to the beauteous prisoners.

Passing this plain, we came to the mouth of the canal of the prince of the faithful, and the water-works; and, traversing a part of Old Cairo, embarked near the Mekias, and landed at Giza, where the French merchants have hired a handsome country house. Here we passed the evening, impatient to continue our route; but, previous to this, a present

(o) The title of the most powerful Bey, as I have before said, signifying governor of the country.

was necessary, to the *Kiachef*, (*p*) who promised us two *Cheiks*, (*q*) to protect us from the plundering Arabs. This, formerly, was a voluntary gift, a mere mark of respect; it is now a tribute, which the governor lays on European curiosity. It originated with the English, who, returning from Bengal, never fail to visit the pyramids. The folly and vanity of these Nabobs, who deal out their gold by handfuls, has made travelling more expensive, and difficult, for persons who have not governed the rich provinces of Bengal.

The present accepted, and the escort come, we left Giza about an hour after midnight, and scarcely had proceeded a quarter of a league before we perceived the tops of the two grand pyramids. We were but three leagues from them, and the moon shone on them with full splendour. They appeared like two pointed rocks, with their summits in the clouds, and the aspect of these antique monuments, which have survived nations, empires, and the ravages of time, inspired veneration. The calm of nature, and the silence of

(*p*) Governor.

(*q*) Men of the law; or of authority among the Arabs. night,

night, added to their majesty ; and the mind, casting a retrospective glance over the ages that have passed by these mountains, which time himself cannot shake, shudders with involuntary awe. Peace be to the last of the seven wonders of the world ! Honoured be the people by whom they were raised !

In the rich plains that surround them, Fable has placed the Elysian fields ; their intersecting canals are the Styx and the Lethe. The creations of Mythology here gleam across the mind ; and the shades of her learned, her warlike, her poetical, her virtuous, heroes, glide and shoot, appear and disappear, at fancy's call. How highly is poetry indebted to these places ; and how highly are they indebted to poetry ; sung as they have been by Orpheus and Homer !

We approach the pyramids, which, with aspect varying, according to the windings of the plain we traverse, and the situation of the clouds, become more and more distinct. At half past three in the morning we found ourselves at the foot of the greatest ; we left our clothes at the door, where it is entered, and descended each with a torch. We proceeded till we came to a place where we were obliged

obliged to crawl, like snakes, to pass into the second entry, which corresponded to the first. We then ascended on our knees, supporting ourselves with our hands against the sides ; otherwise we were in danger of sliding precipitately down an inclined plane, the notches, or steps, of which did not afford certain foot-hold. We fired a pistol about the middle, the fearful noise of which was long reverberated among the cavities of this immense edifice, and which awakened thousands of bats, much larger than those of Europe, that, darting up and down, beat against our hands and face, and extinguished several of our lights. Come to the top, we entered, through a very low door, a great oblong chamber, entirely of granite. Seven enormous stones, crossing from one wall to the other, formed the ceiling. A sarcophagus, cut from a block of marble, is placed at one end ; it has been violated by man, for it is empty, and the lid has been torn off. Bits of earthen vases are scattered round. Beneath this chamber is another, less, where is the entrance of a conduit, full of rubbish. After examining these caverns, where the light of day never enters, and the shades of eternal night

night grow more thick and dark, we descended by the way we came, taking care not to tumble into a well, (r) which is on the left, and which reaches to the bottom of the pyramid. The air within this edifice, being never changed, is so hot and mephitic as almost to suffocate. When we came out, we were bathed in sweat, as pale as death, and might have been taken for spectres, rising from the abyss of darkness. Having eagerly breathed the open air, and refreshed ourselves, we hastened to scale this mountain of man. It is composed of more than two hundred layers of stone that recede in proportion to their height, which is from four feet to two. These enormous steps must all be mounted, to arrive at the summit ; and this we undertook, beginning at the North-East angle, which is the least damaged, but did not accomplish our task till after half an hour's severe labour.

Day began to break, and the East gradually assumed more glowing colours : we sat enjoying a pure air and a most delicious coolness. The sun-beams soon gilded the top

(r) This was known to Pliny—"There is a well "in the Pyramid 36 cubits deep." lib. 36.

of Mokkatam, (s) and soon rose above it, in the horizon ; we received his first rays, and beheld, at a distance, the tops of the pyramids of Saccara, three leagues from us, in the plain of Mummies. The rapid light discovered, every moment, new beauties ; the tops of minarets, of date-tree groves, planted round the villages, and on the hills, and the flooding beams alike inundated mountains and valleys : the herds left the hamlets, the boats spread their sails, and our eyes followed the vast windings of the Nile. On the North were sterile hills, and barren sands ; on the South the river, and waving fields, vast as the ocean ; to the East stood the small town of Giza ; and the towers of Fostat, the minarets of Grand Cairo, and the castle of Salah Eddin, terminated the prospect. Seated on the highest, the most ancient, the most wonderful, of the works of man, as upon a throne, our eyes, wandering round the horizon, beheld a dreadful desert, the rich plains in which the Elysian fields had been imagined, villages, towns, a majestic river, and edifices which seemed the work of giants. The universe contains not a landscape more variegated, more magni-

(s) A mountain which overlooks Grand Cairo.

ficient, more awful ; which more impels contemplation, more elevates the soul !

Having engraved our names on the top of the pyramid, we cautiously descended ; for the deep abyss lay before us ; a piece of stone breaking under our hands, or beneath our feet, had cast us headlong down.

Once more safe at the bottom, we made the tour of the pyramid, contemplating it with a kind of terror. Looked at near, it seems composed of detached rocks ; but, a hundred paces distant, the largeness of the stones is lost in the immensity of the structure, and they appear very small.

To this day, its dimensions are problematical. Since the time of Herodotus many travellers and men of learning have measured it ; and the difference of their calculations, far from removing, have but augmented, doubt. I will give you a table of their measurements ; which, at least, will serve to prove how difficult it is to come at truth.

**Height of the grand
Pyramid.**

Width of one side.

Ancients.	Feet.	Feet.
Herodotus	800	800
Strabo	625	600
Diodorus	600 some inches,	700
Pliny	-	708

Moderns.

Le Bruyn	615	704
Prosp. Alpinus	625	750
Thevenot	520	682
Niebuhr	440	710
Greaves	444	648

Number of the layers or steps.

Greaves	-	-	207
Maillet	-	-	208
Albert Lewenstein	260		
Pococke	-	-	212
Belon	-	-	250
Thevenot	-	-	208

To me it seems evident that Greaves and Niebuhr are prodigiously deceived, in the perpendicular height of the grand pyramid. All travellers agree it contains, at least, two hundred and seven layers, which layers are

from four to two feet high. (u) The highest are at the base, and they decrease insensibly to the top. I measured several which were more than three feet high, and I found none that were less than two ; therefore, the least mean height that can be allowed them is two feet and a half, which, according to the calculation of Greaves himself, who counted two hundred and seven, will give five hundred and seventeen feet, six inches, in perpendicular height.

Observe that Greaves, Maillet, Thevenot, and Pococke, who differ in the number of steps only from two hundred and seven to two hundred and twelve, all have ascended the north-east angle, as the one least damaged. I did the same, and counted two hundred and eight ; but, if we

(u) The steps are from two feet and a half to four feet high, not being so high towards the top as at the bottom. *Pococke's Travels*, vol. I. p. 43.

The height of the first layer is five feet ; but this height insensibly decreases to the top. *Prospex Alpinus*, cap. 6.

This pyramid has two hundred and eight steps of large stones, the mean height of which is two feet and a half, for some that I measured are higher, and were above three feet. *Thevenot*, page 242.

remark

remark that the pyramid has been opened on the side fronting the desert, that the stones have been thrown down, and that the sands which have covered them have formed a considerable hill, we shall no longer wonder that Albert Lewenstein, Belon, and Prosper Alpinus, who ascended either the south-east or south-west angle, less exposed to the sands of Lybia, found a greater number of steps: for which reason, their calculation, agreeing with that of Diodorus and Strabo, seems nearest the true height of the pyramid, taken from its original base; and we have cause to believe it was at least six hundred feet high. What Strabo says is almost proof positive. "About half way up, " on one side, is a stone, that may be removed, " which stops up an oblique entry that " leads to the coffin, which is deposited " within the pyramid." (x) This entry, which is now open, and which, in the time of Strabo, (y) was about half way up, is, at present, not a hundred feet from the base. Thus the rubbish of the coating

(x) Strabo, lib. 17.

(y) i. e. In the age of Augustus.

of the pyramid, and the stones dug out and taken from the inside, since covered by sands, have formed, in this place, a hill two hundred feet high. Pliny supports this opinion. (z) The grand sphinx, in his age, stood sixty-two feet above ground; but its body is now buried under the sand, and the neck and head only appear, which are twenty-seven feet high. If this sphinx, which the pyramids shelter from the north winds that drift up the sands of Lybia, has, nevertheless, been covered thirty feet, imagine how great must be the quantity gathered on the north side of an edifice which intercepts these sands, by a base of more than seven hundred feet in extent. To this we must attribute the prodigious difference between the accounts of the historians, who measured the grand pyramid, in distant times, and at opposite angles. Herodotus, who lived nearest the time of its foundation, when its real base was bare, allows it to have been eight hundred feet square, (a) which I think very probable. This is also the opinion of Pliny, who says it covered a space

(z) Pliny, lib. 36.

(a) Euterpe.

of eight acres. (*b*) Shaw, (*c*) Thevenot, (*d*) and the rest of the travellers, who have pretended this pyramid was never finished, because it is open and is not coated, are mistaken. That it was coated will be proved by the remains of mortar, still found in several parts of the steps, mixed with fragments of white marble: and, if we read, attentively, the description the ancients have given of it, every doubt will vanish, and truth be seen in all its lustre. Let us examine a few of these passages.

“ The grand pyramid was coated by
 “ polished stones, perfectly joined, the least
 “ of which was thirty feet long. It was
 “ built in the form of steps, on each of
 “ which wooden machines were erected, to
 “ raise the stones to the next. Herodotus
 “ Euterpe.

“ The grand pyramid is built of stones,
 “ very difficult to work, but, of eternal
 “ duration. They are hitherto preserved
 “ without damage, (*e*) and were brought

(*b*) Pliny, lib. 36.

(*c*) Shaw's Travels.

(*d*) Voyage de Levant, page 255.

(*e*) About the middle of the Augustan age.

“ from the marble quarries of Arabia.”
Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

The historian thought the whole edifice had been built of stones similar to the coating, which was of very hard marble. Had this coating been broken, in part, he would have seen, underneath, a calcareous stone, tolerably soft.

“ The grand pyramid is built of stones, “ brought from the quarries of Arabia, and “ is not far from the village of Busiris, “ (f) where people live who have the “ agility to mount to the top.” *Pliny*, lib. 36.

We see that Pliny, deceived by appearances, was under the same error as Diodorus; but the passage clearly shews the pyramid was coated. In fact, it would not have been surprizing that the inhabitants of Busiris could mount a building that had steps; but it was exceedingly so that they should ascend a mountain, the four sides of which presented a vast surface of polished marble slabs, laid slanting.

I shall forbear being more particular, to

(f) This village still remains, is called Bousir, and is only a short league from the pyramids.

prove

prove that the grand pyramid was coated with marble: the fact is incontestible. That it was shut is equally true, as appears from Strabo; and that, by raising a stone, placed about the middle of one of its sides, an entry was found, which led to the tomb of the king. To Maillet, who visited this pyramid forty times, with all imaginable care, I will leave the honour of informing you what the means employed to open it were. I have twice examined it within, have twice ascended to its summit, and cannot forbear admiring the sagacity with which this author has unveiled the mechanism of that astonishing edifice. To this letter, therefore, I will subjoin his enquiries, and his plan, because I can speak only as he has spoken, and the merit of the discovery is his right. I shall only add a few notes, which I have thought necessary.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

On the interior structure of the great pyramid, its passages, well, and apartments; with the means employed, by the architects, to close and render it inaccessible; also the violent ones by which it has been opened: the whole extracted from the learned Maillet.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE pyramid has not only been coated, and rendered entire without, but closed, also, and opened with violence: which I will undertake to prove, beyond all doubt.

This violence is first perceived at the natural entry of the pyramid; whence have been taken, as may be seen with a little attention, some of the stones which once shut it, and which were enormously large. These stones were placed above a passage which, by a rather steep descent, led to the

the centre of the pyramid, and to the chambers where the bodies of those who built it must have been deposited. This passage is a hundred feet long, and begins a hundred feet from the base of the pyramid. It is got at by a kind of mountain, of the same height, formed from the ruins of the pyramid itself. It is three feet three inches square, and was wholly filled with stones, well fitted, of the same marble with itself. Above the aperture by which it is entered, we find an extent of nine or ten feet, in the body of the pyramid, whence stones, of a prodigious size, have been taken, as is evident from the remaining stones. This, alone, would suffice to prove the pyramid has been closed; since these stones could only have been removed to find the mouth of this passage; or, more easily to come at the stones which were within the passage, and which were fastened to those they were forced from. See A. Having forced these prodigious stones, and those of the passage which were below these first; it was easy to extract the others, by the purchase they would obtain on the part

‘ part that projected. It is supposed that,
‘ to make this more difficult, when the
‘ stones were inserted in the passage, they
‘ were coated with an exceedingly strong
‘ cement, that they might fix themselves
‘ more firmly, to the sides of the passage,
‘ and become of a piece with the edifice ;
‘ but, by superior force, and hot water,
‘ poured in the passage B, the cement was soft-
‘ ened, and the stones detached, which were af-
‘ terwards got out without much trouble.
‘ Certain it is, they found a method of ex-
‘ tracting them, without injuring the very
‘ stones which form the passage ; they are still
‘ as well polished as at first, except at the
‘ bottom of the passage, where they have chis-
‘ feled, at convenient distances, holes two or
‘ three fingers deep ; which precaution was
‘ necessary, to facilitate the entrance and
‘ return from the pyramid. Were it not
‘ for this assistance, it would not be possible
‘ to descend the passage, without sliding ra-
‘ pidly to the bottom ; or to return, with-
‘ out having ropes fastened on the outside.

‘ I hinted above, the passage was made
‘ of marble : I now add that the stones,
‘ which form the four sides, are of the
‘ finest,

• ' finest, consequently the hardest, white,
• marble. I own it is somewhat yellow,
• and has, no doubt, taken this colour,
• on the surface, from length of time. (g)
• One of these prodigious stones, which,
• as I have said, were forced from the pyra-
• mid, above the entrance of the passage, is
• still found there ; and it is usual for those
• who visit this illustrious monument, to get
• on it and eat. It is of the same marble, be-
• yond all contradiction ; as well as those
• which form the other passages. On this prin-
• ciple I have affirmed, the stones which clo-
• sed the first passage, I have just described,
• and even all the other passages of the pyra-
• mid, were of the same materials ; chosen,
• no doubt, preferably to all others, for its ex-

(g) It is its natural colour. At the foot of Mount Colzoum, on the western shore of the Red Sea, is an immense quarry of this yellow marble : the sandy plain, which leads to it is called *Elaraba*, the plain of Carts, which name it no doubt obtained from the carts, used to carry the marble to the Nile, whence it was transported by water, almost to the foot of the pyramids. Herodotus and Pliny affirm, the stones, with which they were coated were brought from the quarries of Arabia, because that part of Egypt was then called Arabia.

‘ treme hardness. This may be easily proved, ‘ by raising the half of the stone, which ‘ still remains, at C; where is the junction ‘ between the outward and inward passage. ‘ The inside of the pyramid is so dark, and ‘ blackened, by the smoke of candles, and ‘ torches, which, for ages, have been burnt ‘ in going to visit it, that to judge of the qua- ‘ lity of the stones of the chambers and other ‘ places, enclosed in this wonderful pile, ‘ would be difficult; we only can see that ‘ their polish is extremely fine; that they are ‘ of the utmost hardness, and so perfectly ‘ joined that the point of a knife cannot en- ‘ ter the interstices, between them.

‘ When they had emptied this first passage, ‘ and ended this painful labour, they came ‘ to a second, still more considerable. The ‘ task then was to extract the stones that ‘ filled this second, which ascended, to- ‘ wards the top of the pyramid, with the ‘ same sudden steepness that the other had ‘ descended: and, also, to find the beginning ‘ of this passage; which, I imagine, they did, ‘ though the stone that closed it, fitted it so ‘ justly as to leave no indication of any aper- ‘ ture, whatever. They only might perceive
‘ that

• that it did not, like the others, extend
• over the top of the first passage ; which
• they would discover, by sounding, with
• the point of a knife, or some other instru-
• ment, with which they might penetrate the
• cement, that united the four sides of which
• the superficies of that stone was composed,
• and which joined it to those of the passage
• beneath. The entrance to this second pas-
• sage was ten feet distant from the further
• end of the first ; the better to deceive those
• who should attempt to discover it. This
• stone was attacked first, which was no easy
• work ; the place was confined, and it was
• necessary to lay on the back, and work above
• the head, the arms having but little force,
• and the body in continual danger of be-
• ing crushed, by a massy stone, that every
• instant might fall, which may be seen at
• C. The mallet and chissel having con-
• quered the resistance of this first stone, which
• must have been keyed, or some way fasten-
• ed, another succeeded, which, gliding down,
• covered the mouth of the passage ; and to
• extract which a different kind of labour
• was necessary. This they effected : but,
• another still presenting itself, they thought
• this

‘ this mode too tedious, renounced it, and
‘ having prevented the descent of the stones,
‘ which followed and stopped up the mouth
‘ of the passage, they forced a way, forty feet
‘ long, and eight or ten in height and width,
‘ at D, through the stones that surrounded
‘ the bottom of the first passage. This forced
‘ passage (*b*) is at E. In some places it is
‘ low, and confined, in others a man may
‘ stand upright; this was a work of infinite
‘ labour. Afterward turning to the left, to-
‘ ward the second passage, they took three
‘ or four stones out of its side, which made
‘ an opening from fifteen to twenty feet in ex-
‘ tent at G. But it is necessary, before we
‘ speak of the continuation of this work, to
‘ observe that the stone which really closed
‘ this passage, where it communicated with
‘ the first, exactly proportioned to the place,
‘ and entirely stopping up the mouth, has
‘ been removed; as I have said: for the
‘ stone at the mouth of this passage at
‘ present, does not fit; but, on the con-

(*b*) It is unequal, crooked, and very different from the passages of the pyramid; which prove it has been forcibly effected. What must have been the labour to penetrate a mass so enormous, and in a situation so confined, for more than forty feet!

trary,

• trary, leaves a void of five or six fingers, at
• its top; which ought to be that much longer
• than its bottom. See letter F.

• Having broken and extracted the three
• stones at G, by which they came to the
• second passage, it was necessary to clear all
• the other stones away; not only those which
• corresponded to this opening, but those,
• also, which were continued to an unknown
• extent. This was a difficult and tedious
• work, since only one person could be em-
• ployed, in a space three feet three inches
• square. It might be suspected, likewise,
• that, besides the numerous stones they should
• find in this passage, they might come to an
• opener place, where there might be a long
• continuation of stones, again ready to slide
• down, and stop up the passage to the
• center of the pyramid. To avoid which,
• in part, instead of breaking the stones
• one after the other, at G, where the
• passage had been attempted, and begun,
• they resolved to sustain the stones in the
• passage, and, by a prop, or some other
• means, to support the stone above that they
• intended to break. Accordingly they began;
• and, attacking and breaking this succession of

“ stones, each sustained by props of proportionate length, they continued the work, from stone to stone, without widening the extent of the passage, till they came to the end of it, and to an upper space, of which I shall presently speak.”

“ It is proper to observe that, for the whole extent of this passage, great efforts were necessary, to break the stones by which it was filled ; the strokes of the mallets they employed, and those struck on the chisels, used to accomplish the work, have so much injured the sides of the passage that, square as it was, they have almost made it round : a certain proof they worked from top to bottom, and, consequently, propped the stones in their places to break them ; for, had this work been performed at the opening made at G, that part, only, of the passage would have been disfigured, and the remainder, eighty feet in length, (see letter H) from which the stones would have only slipped down to the vacant place, would have remained perfect ; as in the other places, where the sides are entire, quite to the chamber.

“ Having arrived quite at the end of this passage,

“passage, they found its upper part open, and that it had lost a foot in depth; since it was only two feet and a half deep. This part however widened, on each side, a foot and a half; making three feet, and increasing the width to six feet and a half; thereby forming, on each side of the passage, two elevations, or benches, of two feet and a half high, and one foot and a half wide. The passage continued, in the same direction, for the space of a hundred and twenty-five feet, according to the measurement I caused to be made; others say a hundred and forty. At the end of these benches, and this passage, was an esplanade, or platform, eight or nine feet in depth, and six and a half wide; like the space above the benches. This is indicated by the letter R, in the figure, No. 2, on a larger scale, which is given of this part of the pyramid. At intervals of two feet and a half, they have cut, perpendicularly, in the benches, from bottom to top, next the wall, niches (or mortises) a foot long, six inches wide, and eight deep. I shall explain their use hereafter. These benches, and niches, which accompany the passage P,

‘ are shewn at the letters Q. Q. The sides
‘ of the gallery rise above the benches, twen-
‘ ty-five feet high : for the height of twelve
‘ feet, the wall is perfectly equal ; it is then
‘ narrowed by a stone, which projects three
‘ fingers ; and, three feet above that, by
‘ another ; at the same distance by a third ;
‘ and three feet higher, again, by a fourth ;
‘ all equally projecting. It is only four feet
‘ from this to the roof ; which is flat, and
‘ nearly the same width as the passage at the
‘ bottom of the gallery ; that is to say, about
‘ three feet three inches. This elevation was
‘ necessary to the architect, to place the stones,
‘ which were to close the passages. What I
‘ have said of the narrowing of the gallery,
‘ at stated distances, is indicated by the letters
‘ S S. Leaving the passage H, at first entering
‘ the gallery, an opening is found, on the
‘ right, in the wall : it occupies a part of the
‘ bench, is almost round, and cut in the form
‘ of a small door, of about three feet high,
‘ and two and a half wide. From this aper-
‘ ture is a descent into a well ; of which, and
‘ its use, I shall speak presently. See I.

‘ Having once come to the gallery, it was
‘ not difficult to break the stones which filled
the

• the passage P ; because, they were not only
• above the benches, but, the greater width of
• the gallery left the workmen free to use
• beetles, and strike, with ease, on the
• iron wedges, which they employed to
• remove and break these stones. Or they
• might begin with the last, which was easier
• to break than the others, because they might
• stand upright in the passage, and accomplish
• their purpose with greater ease. Having
• done this, and removed the broken stones, by
• examining the bottom of the groove, they
• would perceive that the first stones, with
• which this bottom was covered, to the ex-
• tent of fourteen or fifteen feet (see L) did not
• cross the benches ; and would then easily
• remove them, one after the other. This place
• cleared, they would find a platform, ten
• feet in length, and equal in height, at the
• end of which was a continuation of the
• passage, which formed a triangle of fourteen
• or fifteen feet extent, at the entrance of
• the gallery. On a level with this platform,
• and to the left of the passage which led to
• the gallery, they would see a continuation
• of the passage three feet three inches square.
• This new passage was covered by the stones

• had just removed ; and, they would easily
• divine, it, necessarily, led to some secret
• part of the pyramid, and would resolve to
• satisfy their doubts. This passage (see
• letter N) might easily be emptied of the
• stones by which it was stopped up ; they
• having room to work, and to remove them,
• in a straight line. They were broken in
• the open space, at the entrance of this
• passage, which they found was a hundred
• and eighteen feet in length, and at the end
• of which was a vaulted chamber.

• This chamber (see letter O) is seventeen
• feet and a half long, fifteen feet ten inches
• wide, and has a semi-circular ceiling. On
• the eastern side, there is a niche, sunk three
• feet in the wall, eight feet high, and three
• wide ; which, no doubt, was for a mum-
• my, placed standing, according to the cus-
• tom of the Egyptians. Probably, it was
• the body of the Queen, whose husband
• built the pyramid ; nor have I any doubt
• but that his body was deposited in the
• chamber above, perpendicular to this, but
• about a hundred feet higher, (See letters
• O and D D.) On entering the chamber O,
• the last stone, on the right hand, was
• bevelled,

“ bevelled, that is, sloping at one end, which
“ projected about three fingers; this had
“ been purposely done, to prevent the stone,
“ which was to close the passage N, from enter-
“ ing this chamber: and, we have reason to
“ believe, this closing stone had a correspond-
“ ing bevel, that it might fit exactly and
“ join the wall of the chamber, which an-
“ swered to this entrance. I cannot leave
“ this place without remarking a discovery
“ I made, in the upper part of the passage. (b)
“ To others, more able, I will leave the
“ decision of what might have caused this
“ accident: for my own part, I either think it
“ the effect of an earthquake or of the sinking
“ of this enormous body, which may be more
“ heavy on one side than another, or have a
“ less solid foundation. I certainly saw no
“ similar defect, in any other part of the
“ pyramid, though I examined it with the
“ most scrupulous exactitude; particularly

(b) A long and remarkable crack, at least six lines wide, and strikes at first sight. It is on the side facing the Nile; and, perhaps, the part of the mountain, the foot of which is watered by the river, which filters through the sands, has given way a little, under the weight of this vast pyramid.

‘ every part of the gallery, with a careful
‘ curiosity; and, as it was impossible to intro-
‘ duce a pole, through the winding entrance,
‘ which it is necessary to go through, to
‘ come to the passage, I had several sticks tied
‘ together, at the end of which lighted torches
‘ were fixed; these I raised as near to the
‘ ceiling as possible, and to the wall, without
‘ discovering any defect. I only observed that
‘ the sides were injured, in some places, and
‘ that, on the right, a part of the wall had
‘ been carried away, above the narrowing of
‘ the gallery; which accident, no doubt, was
‘ occasioned by the fall of some stone, in the
‘ closing of the pyramid, the manner of which
‘ I shall hereafter describe, that, having
‘ escaped from the workmen, fell from the
‘ top of the scaffolding, and broke the part
‘ where it alighted.

‘ I must further say that, it is probable,
‘ they were persuaded there was some hidden
‘ treasure, under this first chamber. This will
‘ be seen by a forced entrance, that has been
‘ made, through which, crossing several un-
‘ equal stones, there is a way into the body
‘ of the pyramid, twenty or five and twenty
‘ paces deep. The stones, broken, and re-
‘ moved

‘ moved from that place, at present, almost
‘ fill this chamber. The same attempts have
‘ been made in the chamber above ; though,
‘ probably, in both places, the only recom-
‘ pence, for the infinite pains they had taken,
‘ in spoiling works so beautiful, was the vex-
‘ ation of having spent much time and trou-
‘ ble to no purpose.

‘ The secret of this first chamber disco-
‘ vered, nothing remained but to penetrate
‘ to that which enclosed the body of the king.
‘ They had no doubt but they should find it
‘ on a level with the esplanade, which, as I
‘ have said, was at the high end of the gallery ;
‘ and they imagined, with reason, it ought to
‘ be situated exactly over the first. In fact,
‘ at the end of this esplanade, which, in fig.
‘ 2, is denoted by the letter R, they found
‘ a continuation of the three feet three inch
‘ passage, perfectly closed ; see letter T. This
‘ they began to clear ; and it is probable the
‘ closing stone was so firmly fixed that the
‘ labour of removing it was great. This may
‘ be seen, by a piece of the upper stone
‘ having been broken, to obtain a purchase,
‘ no doubt, on the one beneath, that stopped
‘ up

‘ up the passage. After many efforts, they
‘ removed it ; and, also, effected the removal
‘ of a second, and came to a space seven feet
‘ and a half long. They wished to proceed
‘ to the end of this passage ; but, after these
‘ two stones, they found a third, which could
‘ not be drawn out, because it was wider, and
‘ higher, than the aperture. This was the
‘ last refuge of the architect, to deceive who-
‘ ever might penetrate thus far, and prevent
‘ continuing the search for the mysterious
‘ chamber, in which, twelve paces distant, the
‘ body of the king reposèd, and his treasures
‘ with him, provided any had been so depo-
‘ sited. This difficulty did not, however,
‘ mislead the workmen, nor discourage those
‘ who had undertaken the search of the pyra-
‘ mid. The stone was attacked with mallet
‘ and chissel, and, after much time and labour,
‘ broken ; for it was six feet long, four wide,
‘ and, perhaps, from five to six high : because
‘ here we find a space of fifteen feet high,
‘ which, after rising eight feet, enlarges four,
‘ or thereabouts, toward the gallery. This
‘ extension is denoted in the plate, fig. 2, by
‘ the &c. It corresponded with an aperture
‘ in

• in the passage, a foot and half wide, which
• was two feet before the great stone, and the
• purpose of which I shall describe presently.

• At the top of this space, there was a hole,
• low, a foot deep, and nearly the same in
• height, in the wall that every way closed the
• passage, see A A; which had been purposely
• made to sustain powerful levers, or cross
• beams, over which strong ropes were thrown,
• that held the great stone, by means of iron
• rings, and suspended it in the space Z,
• which it filled, till such time as they suffered
• it to fall, over the passage B B; that is to
• say, till the body of the king had been
• deposited in the chamber. The aperture,
• of a foot and half, made in the passage, see
• V, and which was two feet before the
• space the great stone occupied, had been left
• for the workmen to retire, after the descent
• of this enormous stone. This aperture was
• afterward closed, by a stone of the exact
• size, and only two feet thick, which was
• brought under that aperture, and to which
• they had fixed two rings, toward its upper
• end, to which two rings two chains were
• fastened, which corresponded, above, with
• another heavier stone, hanging over the aper-
• ture

ture Z, which the great stone had occupied, and which had been left void, when it was suffered to fall, over the passage. The ropes that sustained this enormous stone, were supported by the post (or pillar) Y. There was a counterpoising weight, however, on the lower stone, till the workmen should retire, through the cavity of a foot and half, I have mentioned, and which was between this stone and the upper aperture. Having got out, through this cavity, the counterpoise was removed, and the stone fell into its place, in which it was held by another stone, that had been toothed, three fingers wide; which toothing was purposely done, and was three fingers thick, and six or seven wide; as may be seen, at present, about a man's height, when, entering the pyramid, and leaving the three feet three inch passage, one rises upright, in the space V. The toothing (see letter X) of these stones was the last secret, employed to preserve the chamber from violation, and merits attention. Along the side walls of the space where the large stone, six feet long and four wide, was enclosed, round flutings may be seen, three fingers deep, and described by short parallel

‘ parallel lines in the plate (fig. 2.) which had
‘ been cut that the stone might more easily,
‘ and more exactly fall into its proper place.
‘ They were also meant to render it stronger,
‘ and more solid, in case of being attacked.
‘ These precautions will prove the extreme
‘ care employed to preserve the corpse of the
‘ King from violation; supposing men should
‘ be found impious and daring enough for
‘ such an enterprize. If, after the stone, a
‘ foot and a half wide, and three feet six
‘ inches long, which was the measurement of
‘ the aperture V, cut in the passage, was put
‘ in its place, and adjusted, the least opening
‘ remained, this was filled up with cement.
‘ We may also suppose the stone, itself, had a
‘ coating of cement, before it was raised into
‘ the space it was to fill, which would ren-
‘ der its ascent slower by counter-action; the
‘ handle of the mallet would easily clear away
‘ the superfluous cement, and let it into its
‘ place. This stone no longer subsists, nor
‘ yet the great one, which was obliged to
‘ be broken, to remove it out of its place.
‘ No one, however, who with the smallest
‘ attention, examines the manner in which
‘ the described spaces are disposed, and which
‘ are

• are only six feet before the entrance of the
• chamber, where the corpse of the King was
• placed, but will rest persuaded these things
• have been thus managed; or who will not
• admire the art, and ability, of the architect,
• who had but the small space of nine feet
• to perform all this in. To make the un-
• derstanding of this easier, the figures of
• these (2 and 3) have been given on a larger
• scale; the eye, in such cases, being a bet-
• ter interpreter than the pen.

• Having cut away, bit by bit, the great
• stone, from the grooved space, where it had
• descended, they came to the last, which
• ended at the chamber, and filled up the
• space B B. This was not difficult to re-
• move; it gave very little trouble. They
• then might freely enter the mysterious
• chamber, so well defended, D D. The roof
• of this is flat, and composed of nine stones:
• the seven middle ones are four feet wide,
• and above sixteen long; since they rest, on
• each side, on the two walls, to the east and
• west, and which are sixteen feet from each
• other. The two remaining stones seem on-
• ly to be two feet wide, each, for what
• there is more of them is concealed, by the
• two

‘ two other walls over which they are laid.
‘ What was found in this chamber I leave to
‘ the imagination : history only undertakes
‘ to record actions either laudable or such as
‘ ought to be avoided, and not to perpetuate
‘ the memory of outrages which attack na-
‘ ture, because they are, in themselves, suffi-
‘ ciently detestable. Thus, burying in obli-
‘ vion the name of the sacrilegious invader
‘ of this mausoleum, it means to leave us ig-
‘ norant of the secrets it enclosed. All we
‘ know is that this chamber, now, whatever
‘ it might have done, contains nothing but
‘ a case (or tomb) of granite, seven or eight
‘ feet long, four wide, and as many high.
‘ (c) It was here fixed when the place
‘ was closed at the top ; and the reason it
‘ still subsists, is, it could not be taken away
‘ without breaking, and when broken would
‘ have been of no service. It had a lid, as
‘ may be seen by the manner of its rims ;

(c) It seems to me this sarcophagus was of yellow marble, like that of the first stone, found at the entrance of the first passage. A naturalist who should examine these different marbles, and those got from Mount Colzoum, some leagues from where the monastery of St. Anthony is built, would give to truth the most positive of proofs.

• but

• but it was broken when taken off, and no
• remains of it are to be found. Here, no
• doubt, the body of the King was deposited,
• enclosed in two or three cases (or coffins)
• of precious wood, according to the custom
• of the great. Most probably, also, this
• chamber contained many other coffins, be-
• side that of the monarch : those, especial-
• ly, who were here entombed with him, as
• it were, to keep him company. In fact,
• when the body of the King, by whom
• this pyramid was built, was laid in this
• superb mausoleum, living people were here
• introduced, at the same time, never to come
• out, but to be buried alive with the prince :
• which thing I cannot doubt, after the con-
• viction I have had of its truth : my opi-
• nion is founded on what follows. Exactly
• in the middle of the chamber, which is
• thirty-two feet in length, nineteen high, and
• sixteen wide, are two holes, opposite each
• other, three feet and a half above the floor.
• The one, turned toward the north, is a foot
• wide, eight inches high, and runs, in a
• right line, to the outside of the pyramid :
• this hole is now stopped up by stones, five
• or six feet from its mouth. The other, cut
• toward

‘ toward the east, the same distance from
‘ the floor, is perfectly round, and wide
‘ enough to put in the two fists; it en-
‘ larges, at first, to a foot diameter, and
‘ loses itself, descending toward the bottom
‘ of the pyramid. These two holes are at
‘ C C ; and I think, and hope, that sensible
‘ people will suppose with me, these holes
‘ were both made for the use of the persons
‘ who were here shut up with the body of the
‘ king. Through the first, they were to re-
‘ ceive air, food, and other necessaries; and
‘ they had, no doubt, provided a long case, for
‘ this purpose, proportioned to the size of
‘ the hole; with a cord, by which the
‘ persons in the pyramid might draw it to
‘ them, and another without, by which
‘ it might be again drawn back. These,
‘ apparently, were the means which sup-
‘ plied the necessities of those who were
‘ within the pyramid, so long as any one
‘ remained living. I suppose each of these
‘ persons to be provided with a coffin, to
‘ contain his corpse, and that they successively
‘ rendered this last pious duty to each other,
‘ till only one remained, who could not have
‘ this assistance, granted to the rest of his com-

‘panions. The other hole served for the
‘voidance of excrements, which fell into
‘a deep place, made for that purpose. I
‘meant to have searched the outside of the
‘pyramid, for the place that should corre-
‘pond with the oblong hole, and toward
‘which two punctuated lines are drawn, on
‘the plate which represents the inside of
‘the building.* Here it is possible I might
‘have found new proofs of what I have
‘advanced: this search, however, might
‘not only have given umbrage to the pow-
‘ers of government, who would not have
‘failed to have supposed some treasure was
‘attempted to be discovered; but I thought
‘the hole might terminate in some hollow
‘of the outside, and apprehended I might
‘find it totally stopped up, either by the
‘body of the pyramid, or by the coating
‘stone. Others, from what I have related,
‘may search the part to which this aper-
‘ture should correspond, and thus gain
‘complete proof of its destined use; though,

* There are no such lines on the plate: they have been omitted, through some mistake, and we have not thought ourselves authorized in supplying what can only be accurately imagined by having been seen. T.
‘to

‘ to me, this is not doubtful, nor does it seem possible to imagine any other.

‘ Having explained, as clearly as the subject would permit me, by what means, and efforts, the pyramid was forced, and opened, I have now to remove a doubt, which the reading of what I have said may have raised. It may be asked, Where were all the stones, necessarily employed in closing the passages I have described, stored up? And in what manner were these passages closed, by workmen who were to get from within? This explanation will not be less curious, or merit less admiration, than the former.

‘ I have already observed that, along the benches of the passage P, which was at the bottom of the gallery, niches, or mortises, had been perpendicularly cut, a foot long, six inches wide, and eight deep: see QQ. These mortises, perfectly corresponding with each other, through the whole length of the benches, were each two feet and a half distant, and had been made, when building the gallery, that each might contain a piece of wood, a foot square, and three or four feet long,

• from which six inches had been cut at the
• bottom, for the space of eight fingers,
• agreeing with the mortises, into which
• they were to fit. They were to raise a
• scaffold on, destined to sustain the stones,
• wanted to fill all the passages, which
• were to be closed, within the pyramid,
• as well as the passage P at the bottom
• of the gallery.* These posts were cut in
• like manner at their upper end, and long
• pieces of wood, with mortises, similar to
• those of the benches, rested on these up-
• rights, and formed, from one side of the
• gallery to the other, a safe stay, from
• bottom to top, on which to nail boards,
• six feet and a half long, six inches thick,

* The letter of indication, in the French, is F ; but the letter F, in the plate, is at the mouth of the second passage, very distant from the gallery : this must, therefore, have been a mistake. It may not be improper to add, here, that the text in this passage indicates, by *fingers* M. Maillet meant *inches* ; and that, with a few exceptions, a more literal, consequently less elegant, translation of this than of any other letter in the work was requisite : not even excepting the measurements, and technical phrases, necessary in describing the antiquities of Alexandria and Thebes. T.

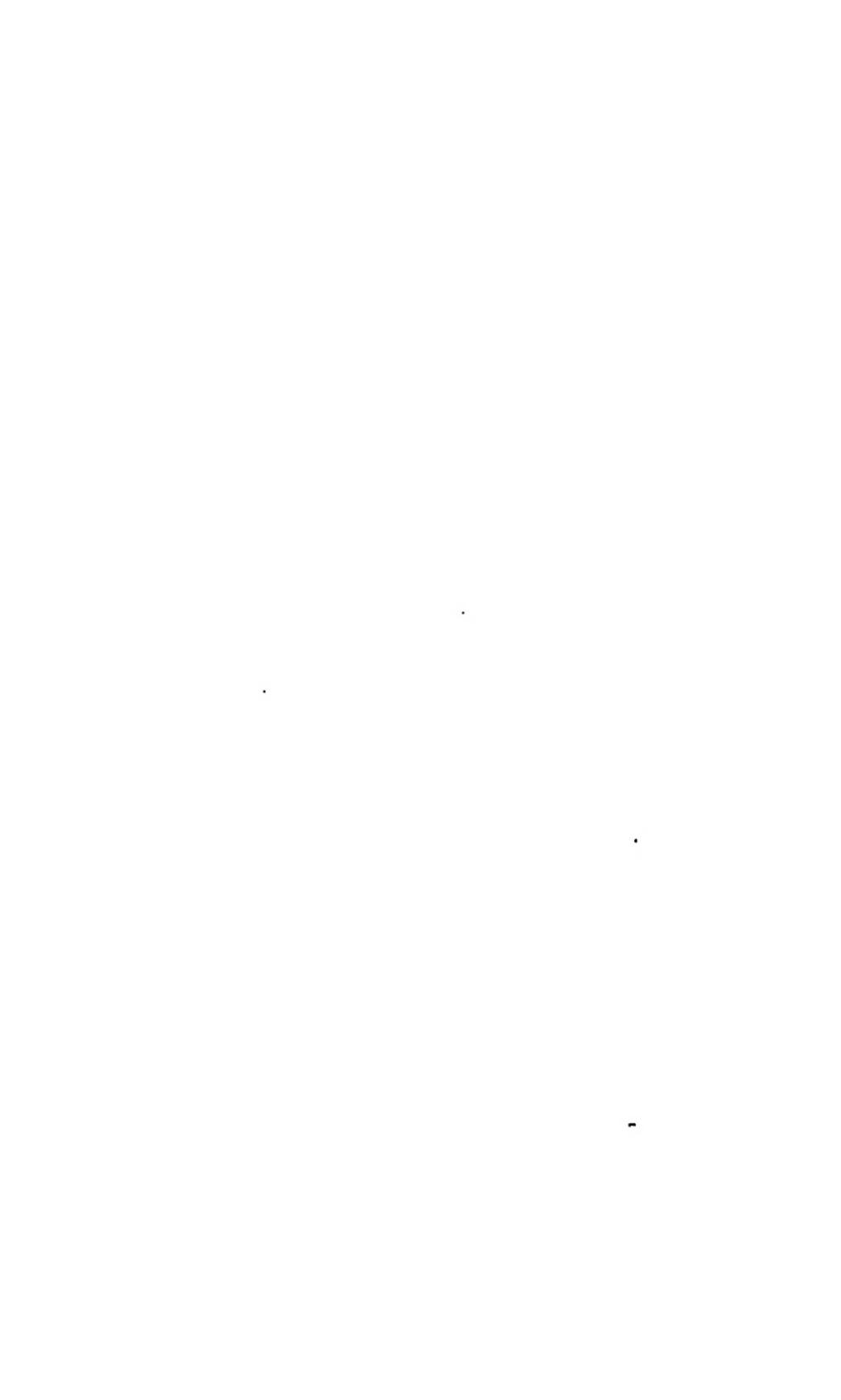
* and

‘ and well planed, whereon a first row of
‘ stones was laid. The benches, as I have
‘ said, rose two feet and a half above the
‘ bottom of the gallery. I suppose the scaf-
‘ fold was placed at the height of three feet
‘ above the benches, therefore, from the
‘ bottom of the gallery to the scaffold was
‘ an elevation of five feet and a half, which
‘ was sufficient for the workmen to stand
‘ upright. I likewise observed that from
‘ the bottom of the passage to the ceiling of
‘ the gallery was twenty-seven feet and a
‘ half, and from the bottom of the passage
‘ to the scaffold we may allow six, the re-
‘ mainder from the scaffold will then be
‘ twenty-one and a half, in which space
‘ four rows of stones might be laid, of three
‘ feet and a half high, the size necessary to
‘ fill the passages, and there would still re-
‘ main a space of seven feet and a half above
‘ the stones; but I will suppose that, be-
‘ tween each row of stones, boards, three
‘ inches thick, were placed in order that
‘ they might be more easily removed, by
‘ sliding them along these boards. Three
‘ rows of stones were sufficient to fill all
‘ the apertures which are, at present, emp-

‘ tied. It may be that there are other passages, not opened, in the body of the pyramid, since the gallery would easily contain four rows of these stones, and even five, if needful. This may be proved by the calculation I have given, and it is not probable they would raise the gallery, more than was necessary, to the weakening the whole body of the building.

‘ But let us content ourselves with the discovered passages which have been forced and opened. Let us consider the quantity of stones with which they certainly were filled, and which have been broken, except three feet and a half, or four feet, of these same stones, which remain at F, and which still close the entrance of the passage H, which communicates with the first. I call this first (see B) the exterior passage, because it was closed from without, while the others were filled up within the pyramid itself, from the stones placed along the gallery; and I allow three rows of stones for the filling all these passages, the justness of which may be found by calculation.

‘ Thirteen feet and a half of stone was necessary to fill the passage which led to the



• the royal chamber, and which was on a
• level with the esplanade, at the upper extre-
• mity of the gallery. A stone of six feet
• was let down from the scaffold at R, and
• pushed up the passage to the entrance of the
• chamber at B, (fig. 2, where it was stopped by
• the flooring of the chamber, which was two
• finger's higher than that of the passage.
• They afterwards let the stone of six feet fall
• over this passage, which I before spoke of
• as suspended in the space Z. Then, the
• workmen having retired through the aper-
• ture V, and this aperture closed, two other
• stones, of seven feet and a half, were let
• down from the scaffold, and perfectly filled
• up the passage, which was nineteen feet long.

• We may suppose that, to facilitate their
• work, they had fixed to the wall at the end
• of the gallery, next the esplanade, and oppo-
• site to the stones ranged on the scaffold, a
• thick iron crook, with a strong pulley, by
• which workmen on the platform might
• raise the stones one after another from the
• scaffold, and let them down upon the plat-
• form; that afterwards the workmen made a
• square hole on the side of the stone next
• themselves, three or four finger's deep, and

‘ wider at bottom than at top, into which
‘ they inserted two pieces of iron, thickest at
‘ the bottom, with two rings, and wedged
‘ in with iron. These precautions would
‘ give them a certain purchase to raise the
‘ stones over the scaffold with the rope that
‘ passed through the rings to suspend them
‘ by means of the pulley, and afterwards
‘ gently let them down on the esplanade or
‘ platform, whence they might be removed,
‘ without much trouble, to their place of
‘ destination.

‘ Having filled the first passage, they must
‘ next close up that of letter N, the extent
‘ of which was a hundred and eighteen feet,
‘ leading, as I have said, into the chamber O,
‘ where the corpse of the queen had pro-
‘ bably been deposited. This was not a dif-
‘ ficult work. They next collected as many
‘ stones as were necessary to cover the entrance
‘ of this passage to fill up the groove L, and
‘ the triangular platform of ten feet LM,
‘ which was before noticed, at the entrance of
‘ the gallery. A hundred feet more of these
‘ stones were wanting to fill up the passage
‘ H, through which the pyramid was forced,
‘ and which, for the space of eighty feet in
‘ length,

length, is totally disfigured. A hundred and twenty-four feet of stone more was wanting for the passage P beneath the gallery, and between the banks and over which the scaffolding was raised. It then was perfectly closed, except that the last stone found some impediment from an elevation of four or five fingers, which, as I have already remarked, is at the end of this passage, and which has not been omitted in the plate.

What I have said, concerning these passages, their filling up, and the intention of the gallery, may appear new and bold enough to occasion some critic to treat it as chimical, or at least conjectural; nor do I require implicit faith; but the honour of having imagined a very probable system cannot be denied me, capable of explaining, at a glance, wonders which have hitherto been unknown. I will go further, and dare affirm, whoever will pay attention to my observations, their connection and consequences, will find it impossible to deny that my conjectures, if so the critic shall please to call them, are so well founded that they must be thought truths. For my own part, after

‘ after all the researches, all the reflections I
‘ have made on the natural structure of the
‘ pyramid, I boldly declare it is impossible
‘ these things could be otherwise than as I
‘ have described them. I see immediately that,
‘ the pyramid finished, that is to say, the grooves
‘ made, and the gallery roofed, no stone
‘ could have been brought into this gallery
‘ large enough to close the passages from
‘ within to without ; and that the sole care of
‘ the architect was to prevent those from be-
‘ ing extracted which he had brought hither
‘ to shut it up in, what he supposed, an invi-
‘ sible manner. I perceive his design in
‘ making the long groove L at the bottom of
‘ the gallery, and that it could only have been
‘ cut for bringing the stones which were
‘ afterwards to fill up the inner passage, and
‘ by the stoppage I find at the upper end of
‘ this groove, judge that it must itself have
‘ been also filled up with stones, after the
‘ passage had been absolutely stopped. I am
‘ confirmed in the double use of this groove,
‘ by its exquisite polish ; its length, I observe,
‘ is proportionate to that of the inner passage :
‘ I see this passage is still in part stopped,
‘ that is to say, at its entrance F ; I also see
‘ the q

• they have not penetrated into the pyramid
• through this true passage, but, on the con-
• trary, have been obliged to make a false one,
• through which, again coming to the sides of
• the passage, they have more easily attacked
• the stones that filled it: I likewise find it
• injured through its whole extent, which in-
• forms me recourse was obliged to be had to
• violence to open it; and further conclude, it
• is thus injured, as far as where the gallery
• begins, because the stones it contained were
• broken in this passage; and that, for the
• space of a hundred and twenty-four feet,
• there were, in the groove, and behind these
• stones, four hundred and fifteen feet of other
• stones, ready continually to succeed those
• which should have been removed from the
• passage, and to fill the void they would have
• left. I even suspect those who forced
• the pyramid were acquainted with this suc-
• cession of stones, shut in by the groove; had
• they not, they would have been satisfied, no
• doubt, with breaking the stones which
• filled the passage in the opening they had
• forced. This would have been the easiest
• mode, and, if they took another, it was from
• the knowledge they had of the stones which
• were

• were ready to glide through the groove into
• the passage, as fast as it was emptied.

• I have already hinted, that there may
• be other passages, which still remain closed,
• in the pyramid, and it is not, perhaps, with-
• out reason they have been searched for; but,
• unfortunately, their search was misguided,
• when directed to the bottom of the two cham-
• bers. If there should be another passage beside
• those already known, they ought, past contra-
• diction, to seek it between the two chambers;
• nor can its entrance be any where but toward
• the middle of the groove; I must also
• mention that the short projecting lines, at
• letter M, denote certain holes, purposely
• made at the building of the pyramid.
• These holes were to serve as steps to those
• who, from the passage N, leading to the
• first chamber, wished to ascend the groove,
• which, as I have said, is interrupted, at
• this part, or descend, the same way, into
• this passage. I have said that a man
• might pass from the bottom of the groove,
• upright, on the scaffold. No doubt, on
• both sides of the gallery, and, from the
• top to the bottom, under the scaffold, there
• were ropes, at different distances, fixed to
• beams,

‘ beams, in order that those who wished to
‘ ascend or descend through the groove might
‘ without slipping. They first served the work-
‘ men in constructing the gallery, and closing
‘ the passages, and, afterwards, those who
‘ visited the chambers, those who transported
‘ the corpses of the king and queen, and,
‘ finally, the persons who ascended the royal
‘ chamber, with the coffin of the king,
‘ there to remain and die.

‘ Thus, there is no doubt but that, by
‘ means of stones placed on the scaffold, all
‘ these passages, made within the pyramid,
‘ were filled.

‘ Having finished their work, nothing
‘ remained but for the men, who were
‘ within, to get out, unless we suppose they
‘ began by breaking the scaffold, and the
‘ wood it was made of, and that they used
‘ the same means to get these materials out
‘ of the pyramid, as they did to get out
‘ themselves. The aperture by which they
‘ effected this was the well I have men-
‘ tioned, which is on the right hand, at
‘ entering the gallery, and which occupies
‘ a part of the bottom of the benching,
‘ rising two feet in the wall: it is oval,
‘ and

• and its situation and descent are indicated
• at I.

• This well descends towards the bottom
• of the pyramid by a line almost perpendi-
• cular, but a little inclining, something in
• the form of the Hebrew letter Lamed, as
• may be seen in the plate. About sixty
• feet from the mouth, is a square window,
• through which there is an entrance to a
• small grotto, cut in the mountain, which is
• not here of solid stone, but a kind of gravel,
• the particles of which strongly adhere. This
• grotto extends from East to West, and may
• be above fifteen feet long, after which is
• another groove, dug likewise in the rock,
• very steep, approaching the perpendicular.
• It is two feet four inches wide, two feet and
• a half high, and descends through a space of
• a hundred and twenty-three feet, after
• which nothing is found but sands and stones,
• either purposely thrown there, or fallen of
• themselves. I am convinced this passage
• was only designed as a retreat for workmen
• who were at the building of the pyramid;
• its declivity, winding route, smallness, and
• depth, are certain proofs the coming from
• this well, which could not have been effect-

• ed

‘ ed till after many turnings, perhaps, not till
‘ after having mounted back towards its
‘ mouth, could only, I have no doubt, have
‘ been through a passage, over which was a
‘ row of stones, which they had found the
‘ art to stop, and which fell down into this
‘ passage, by the means of some spring set in
‘ motion by them, when all the workmen had
‘ retired, and thus closed it up for ever. We
‘ do not find this aperture has ever been at-
‘ tempted ; whether it be that they were igno-
‘ rant of it, or that its smallness impeded the
‘ workmen. The pyramid has only been
‘ attacked by the royal route, through which
‘ the corpse of the king must have been
‘ taken, and all the people, living or dead,
‘ to be buried with him. By the same route
‘ the attendant mourners must have entered
‘ the pyramid, and have come out, after
‘ having paid their last duties to the mo-
‘ narch, and deposited his corpse in the
‘ sepulchre himself had chosen.

‘ Nor must it be supposed that all those
‘ who worked at this vast edifice were
‘ acquainted with its interior structure, nor
‘ even that such knowledge was to be ob-
‘ tained by entering the pyramid after it was
‘ finished.

finished. This was a secret known only to the architects who had planned this proud edifice, or at least, to a small number of select persons, who worked under their direction, to form the passages I have just mentioned, in this my description of the pyramid. It is, moreover, most probable these workmen were not venal, or capable, from any motive whatever, of betraying such a secret: they were, no doubt, persons chosen from those most worthy, and most attached to the monarch, among the various workmen in his service, and on whose zeal, probity, gratitude and religion, all dependence might be placed. I can readily believe, to ensure their faith, the prince named them himself, before his death, and appointed a commodious, peaceable, and honourable retreat for them, in the temples, (d) enriched by the gifts of these sovereigns, which could not fail to accompany these kind of buildings, and which,

(d) We see the ruins of ancient buildings, before the pyramids, which probably were temples where offerings were made for the kings whose bodies reposed in these superb mausoleums.

as

‘as I have before demonstrated, really did
‘accompany them.’

Such is the opinion of Maillet concerning the inside of the grand pyramid, and, after twice examining it, with his book in my hand, I could not but admire the justness of his remarks. His means of closing the passages to me appear probable, and they have certainly been emptied as he has described.

Some Arabian authors pretend, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, avarice excited the Caliph Mahmoud to violate this ancient monument, thinking to find treasures here, but his hopes were deceived. Some idols of gold, beside the mummy of the king, were the sole reward of many years labour, and excessive expences. Other oriental writers attribute this enterprize to the famous Caliph Aaroun el Rashid, who lived in the time of Charlemagne, to whom he sent a water-clock, the first seen in France. This Caliph, who caused science to flourish, and had the best Greek and Roman works translated into Arabic, wishing to know the interior of this astonishing edifice, had it opened. Be these opinions as they may, we cannot doubt but the opening of the pyramid

was effected under the government of the Arabs.

It is also an incontestible fact that it was a mausoleum for one of the Egyptian Pharaohs. The tombs scattered over the plain, at the end of which it is built, the sarcophagus of the great chamber, the niche of the chamber beneath, the testimony of Herodotus, Strabo, and the Arabian historians, all prove its truth. I know that M. Paw (*e*), who in his closet fees better than travellers, teaches them this pyramid was the sepulchre of Osiris ; but he is single in an opinion which contradicts facts, and history. Rendering justice to the knowledge of this learned gentleman, I cannot avoid, in continuing these letters, to remove some errors, established by him, relative to the dietetic system of the Egyptians, and the climate.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*e*) *Rech. Phil. sur les Egyptiens & les Chinois*, page 50.

LETTER XIX.

The other pyramids, adjacent places, grotto of the Santon, the grand Sphinx, its signification, and the return to Giza.

To M. L. M.

Giza.

I HAVE collected the enquiries of the ancients and moderns concerning the grand pyramid, have added such observations as my own visits have supplied, and hope, Sir, these will, together, give you a satisfactory idea, and make the trouble of searching numerous volumes, which, to read and reflect on, would but augment your doubts so long as you shall not come and examine them yourself with the most scrupulous attention, unnecessary. After meditating over the descriptions given of these ancient monuments, I own, I found it impossible to form any fixed judgment, and remained in painful incertitude. The darkness of so many different opinions concealed the truth, and the more I read, the less I knew; but, guided by reflection, while at the foot of the pyramid,

and, afterwards, in its deep interior gloom, on its high top, I have believed I discovered the truth I sought. May it have guided my pen, and given conviction to your mind, for even in matters of science, doubt is painful.

Herodotus (*f*) informs us the expence of building this pyramid, in vegetables, only, to feed the workmen, was written in Egyptian characters, on its marble. Their removal of the coating has destroyed these hieroglyphics, but did they remain as they do in a hundred other parts of Egypt they would afford no pictures of thought. They are mute and insensible as the stone on which they are engraved. And must the language which would teach us the history of ancient Egypt, and cast a ray of light over the darkness that envelops the first ages of the earth, be buried with the priests by whom it was invented !

(*f*) Egyptian characters are cut on the marble of the pyramid, describing how much it cost to feed the workmen, only in onions and other vegetables. The priest who interpreted these hieroglyphics to me said it amounted to 1600 talents. Herodotus Euterpe.

The sum will appear chimerical to those who shall calculate in their closets, but he is not astonished at it who has seen this mountain built of rocks. This passage proves, too, that vegetables, in the most distant ages, were, as at present, the chief food of the Egyptians.

It

It is time we should continue our voyage, Sir.—Having observed all that could interest, we proceeded to the second pyramid, which seems as high as the first. Strabo affirms it is so, Diodorus Siculus the same; but adds that the base of the second is less (*g*), and attributes its construction to Cephren, brother and successor to Chemmis, who built the one I have already described. The coating of this pyramid is destroyed in many places, but the fractures made by force, prove that men, rather than time, have effected this havock. Sixty feet of the upper part is entire because, no doubt, it was the most difficult, to detach. Perhaps those who have attempted to violate this ancient mausoleum, repelled by the length, difficulty, and expence of the work, contented themselves with carrying off the outside marble.

East of these two pyramids, is a third, which appears very small, comparatively, yet is about three hundred feet square (*h*), and was built by Micerinus, who wishing to equal the fame of his father Chemmis,

(*g*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. sect. 2.

(*h*) Strabo, lib. 17.

would coat it with marble from the Thebais (*i*), which is beautiful, spotted with black, of a fine grain, exceedingly hard, and capable of a perfect polish. The prince died when the work was only half done. The fineness of the marble has led the Arabs to break it off. Some stones still remain, and fragments round the base. The name of Micerinus was inscribed on the northern side (*k*), but, like the hieroglyphics of the grand pyramid, has been removed with the coating.

Many fables are related by historians of this pyramid. Some say it was built by a famous courtezan, from the gains she made by her lovers. Others that an eagle carrying off the small slipper of the beauteous Rhodope, came to Naucratis, let it fall at Memphis, and that the King, charmed by its beauteous form, wished to know whom it belonged to, became afterwards in love with

(*i*) The quarries of this fine marble are at the upper end of Egypt, in the mountain at the foot of which Syene was built. There are three sorts, the first a perfect black, the second only spotted, and the third mixed with red. The granite of the two first was used in the building of tombs, the other for columns and obelisks.

(*k*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. sect. 2.

Rhodope,

Rhodope, married her, and that she built the pyramid.

The Arabs, who love the marvellous, have eagerly credited these childish tales, and called the pyramid Heramelbent. The ancient edifice of the maiden. Round here are the ruins of three other pyramids (*l*), built, says Diodorus, as mausoleums for the wives of the Kings who built the great ones.

Opposite the second, eastward, is the enormous sphinx, the whole body of which, as I have said, is buried in the sand, the top of the back only to be seen, which is above a hundred feet long, and is of a single stone, making part of the rock on which the pyramids rest. Its head rises about seven and twenty feet above the sand. Mahomet has taught the Arabs to hold all images of men or animals in detestation ; and they have disfigured the face with their arrows and lances. Pliny pretends (*m*) the body of Amasis was deposited within this sphinx. Many authors believe the veil of the grand pyramid end-

(*l*) Salah Eddin demolished them, and built the walls of Grand Cairo, and the castle on mount Mokattam, with the stones.

(*m*) Plin. Hist. Nat.

ed here, and that the priests came here, at certain times, to deliver their oracles ; but these are meer conjectures (*n*).

M. Paw (*o*) says, these sphinxes, the body of which is half a virgin, half a lion, are images of the Deity, whom they represent as a hermaphrodite ; which opinion seems not to me more happy than that concerning the sepulchre of Osiris. The Nile increases, overflows, and inundates Egypt, under the signs Leo and Virgo ; and the sphinx was a hieroglyphic which told the people when this most important event in the whole year should happen, which is the reason this figure is so very often repeated : it stands before all remarkable buildings, and meant to say, “Inhabitants, under such a sign, at such a time, the river shall overflow your fields, and make them fertile.” While we were admiring the miracles of ancient Egypt, and M. Adanson, first royal interpreter at Alexandria, was em-

(*n*) They bring the cavity on the top of the head of the sphinx, through which the priests delivered their oracles, as a proof of this opinion ; but this cavity is only five feet deep, and neither communicates with the mouth, nor the body of the sphinx.

(*o*) *Rech. Phil. sur les Egyptiens & les Chinois.*

ployed

ployed drawing, we saw ten Arabs come galloping, with their lances, and approaching within pistol shot, either to attack or force money from us. We had muskets and pistols, and were very able to repel them ; but on the first fire a whole tribe could have fallen upon us. We, therefore bade our cheiks speak to, and tell, them we were their guests, and they had taken us under their protection. This disarmed them, at once, for they highly respect the rights of hospitality. Alighting, they offered to accompany us wherever we pleased; but as they do not like to be troubled for nothing, they politely asked some gratuity, which we bestowed. This slight present having ratified peace, I heard them say, in a half whisper, let us visit the saint. Away they went, and I, following, passed the second pyramid, and stopped with them at the door of a grotto cut in the rock, into which, pulling off their shoes, they went. I was the only European who imitated them. The grotto was spacious, clean, handsome, and very cool. At one end was a niche, six feet high, before which an old curtain, with many holes, was drawn. The Arabs came near, with reverence; each kneeled

kneeled in turn, and kissed a foot which was held out under the curtain. My turn being come, I approached, and said, O holy saint, shew me thy face. My compliment was taken as an insult, and, judging by my pronunciation, I was not an Arab, he answered, furlily—*Roub anni ia kelb.* Leave me dog. Hearing this, the Mussulmen looked furiously at me, and I, hastily, went away; happy that my imprudence had no worse consequences, and promising never more to hold conversation with an Egyptian Santon.

These men are vagabonds who affect total indifference to the riches of this world, and, living on alms, are guilty of a thousand extravagancies which makes them pass for inspired. They go entirely naked through the cities, and, violating decency, blush not, publickly, to commit actions which the rest of mankind conceal in the darkness of night, or the veil of mystery (p). I cannot describe

(p) A friend from Tunis has written to me concerning a scene of this nature, which passed in the open city, between a Santon and a woman. The people respectfully surrounded the momentary man and wife, and any European, who should have ventured to joke at the sight, would have risqued being stoned.

the

the veneration in which the populace hold these shameless cynics; women especially, who, naturally timid and modest, forget, in their behalf, that reserve and pudency ought always to accompany their sex, and that men, who with effrontery gratify every appetite, do not merit so much respect.

Satisfied with seeing and wondering, we returned to Giza ; where we remained some days examining the environs. We met, on our route, several Chacals, (or Jackalls) which ran, with great speed, towards the mountains. These fawn coloured animals, the size of a dog, have a dragging tail, and a pointed muzzle. They live on hunting, and the fish of the lakes. The Arabs call them dib, and they are the wolves of Africa.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XX.

Giza, an ancient suburb of Fostat ; mistake of modern travellers. The charming view of the Nile. The isle of Raouda, Old Cairo, and the boats which incessantly pass up and down the river ; with particulars concerning the manufactory and making of sal-ammoniac.

To M. L. M.

Giza.

GIZA, as you have seen, Sir, is a small place, governed by a *kiacher*, and owes its origin to the governors of the Caliphs, who chose Fostat for their place of residence. The ancients, who have exactly described the environs of the pyramids, do not mention Giza, which was founded by the Arabs, as its name shews. (q) Shaw was deceived in placing it on

(q) Giza, in Arabic, signifies angle or end ; and this name was given it because, when *Masr* Fostat flourished, Giza, one of its suburbs, was separated from it only by the Nile. Macrizi, speaking of the descent of Louis IX. and mentioning one end of Damietta, says, 'The Giza of Damietta.'

the

the ancient scite of Memphis; for, beside that there are neither ruins nor antiquities here, the Greeks, Romans, and especially the Arabs, have so positively marked the situation of the ancient metropolis of Egypt that, reading them attentively, it is impossible to be mistaken, as I think I shall prove in my next letter.

Giza is surrounded by immense plains, profusely covered with vegetables, flax, and corn. Here they grow the carthamus, improperly, by the people of Provence, called safranon, the flower of which they buy and send to Marseilles, to use in dyeing the cloths of Languedoc. The Egyptians, wanting wood, make fuel of the stalk: the pod includes a grain, from which they extract *zeitbelou*, soft oil, of an insipid taste, but eaten by the common people, though seldom used by the rich, but in the illuminations so frequent in Egypt.

This small town has a manufactory of sal-ammoniac, into the laboratory of which I several tynes went, and, notwithstanding the horribly infectious smoke, observed the procedure. Imagine arches with parallel apertures or slits, through which the necks, two inches

inches long, and equal in diameter, of round glass-bottles, are put, which, before they are thus ranged, are coated with clay. The interstices between each bottle are also stopped with clay; the bottles are contained within the arch, and the necks are supported by walls, the neck only being exposed to the action of the open air; these bottles are full of soot, swept from the chimnies of the common people, whose constant fuel is dung of animals, dried in the sun, and mixed with chopped straw. A fire is lighted underneath the mouths of the bottles, of the same substances, and is kept burning three days and nights. The bottles are unstopped, and the exhaling vapour of the heated soot insensibly attaches itself to the necks, where it condenses, crystallizes, and forms a bright and solid body, about two inches thick. The process over, the bottle is broken, the ashes cleared, and the cake of sal-ammoniac, such as sent to Europe, obtained, first taking from its underside a black crust, which has not acquired the degree of perfection necessary; but this crust, being put into other bottles, yields, on a second process, the most esteemed and most perfect sal-ammoniac. About two thousand

thousand quintals are annually fabricated in the different manufactories of the country ; it is an article of commerce between the Egyptians and Europeans, being used by pewterers, goldsmiths, founders, and chymists.

The French merchants of Grand Cairo have a country-house at Giza, and a small garden, with orange, lemon, and date-trees, situated on the bank of the Nile. The beautiful island of Raouda, and its odoriferous bowers, the mekias, against which the waves beat with violence, Old Cairo, and its surrounding gardens, with a multitude of boats which incessantly cross the river, are seen from its windows ; extensive and verdant prospects, variegated with houses, mosques, or more distant minarets, charm the eye, inducing the spectator to sit hours contemplating these smiling objects, while the fresh air, which follows the course of the Nile in currents, comes, reanimates the senses, and gives the soul that energy which is necessary to taste the beautiful and the sublime. To Giza therefore, fatigued by business, or suffocated by the heats of Grand Cairo, reverberated from the burning sands of Mokattam, the French come to repose : at Giza they recover their

their health, and, in pure and cooling airs, breathe life in the aromatic exhalations of plants and flowers.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXI.

On the true situation of Memphis, confirmed by Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny, and the Arabian authors; modern travellers refuted. The city, as it was in the time of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus; its temples, palaces, and lakes described. Quotation from Abulfeda, proving its total destruction by Amrou; ruins still seen near the village Menf, the poor remains of the ancient Memphis.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IT is time, Sir, to speak of Memphis, and examine the opinions of writers concerning this celebrated city, which are very opposite; some pretending it stood where Giza now stands, and others placing it five leagues farther south. Is it not astonishing that the scite of the ancient metropolis of Egypt, a city near seven leagues in circumference, (r) containing magnificent temples and palaces which art laboured to render eternal,

(r) A hundred and fifty stadia. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. sect: 2.

should at present be a subject of dispute among the learned? Thus, in their turn, are all the proud monuments of man buried in the dust. History, I hope, will teach us to find the remaining vestiges of Memphis, and dissipate that darkness in which erudition has itself endeavoured to hide them.

“ Queen Semiramis built the castle of “ Grand Cairo (*s*), into which she put a “ numerous garrison of Babylonians to be “ a check upon Memphis, which stood “ facing it, west of the Nile, and prevent “ rebellion in the capital” (*t*).

Shaw is of the same opinion, and says, the ancient Memphis, the remains of which are now buried and covered over, stood, opposite Cairo, on the bank of the Nile next Lybia, at the village of Giza (*u*).

Pococke, an exact observer, comes afterward, and, inspecting the place, and reading the ancients, is of a contrary opinion (*x*). War is declared among the learned

(*s*) I think I have removed this first error in Letter VII. and proved it was built by Salah Eddin.

(*t*) Father Sicard, Lettres Edifiantes, p. 471.

(*u*) Shaw's Travels, vol. ii. chap. 4...

(*x*) Pococke's Travels, book i. chap. 5.

of England, and the authors of the Modern Universal History have pronounced the following sentence.

“ The city of Mesr (the Memphis of the old geographers) was situated on the western, or Lybian, bank of the Nile, and occupied the spot on which the village of Geeza at present stands. This we learn from Dr. Shaw, whose geographical observations relating to Egypt and Arabia Petræa are more curious, and superior in point of truth, at least probability, learning, accuracy, and judgment, to those of any other modern traveller. In fine, his book will stand its ground when all the efforts of envy and malice have been spent; when some of those others, written in imitation of it, or with a design to depreciate it, will be buried in oblivion, or, at least, meet with that contempt which they so justly deserve.” (y)

Here, Sir, is a very dogmatical decision against all travellers who shall dare to contradict Dr. Shaw. If the authors of the Universal History thought they had no oe-

(y) Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. i. page 438, edit. 1759.

casion to read the ancients, they ought, at least, to have looked over the Arabian geographers; they would not then so emphatically have supported an evident error. Permit me to cite my authorities.

“ Memphis is situated in the narrowest part of Egypt, on the western border of the Nile, the waters of which form a lake on the north and west of the city” (z).

This is a vague description; for, to determine the situation of Memphis, it is necessary the lake still should subsist, and that the valley of Egypt should be measured to find its narrowest part. Strabo (a) has been more circumstantial. “ From the castle of Babylon (b) the pyramids near Memphis are seen, on the other side of the Nile.— Lakes, in part, surround the city; the buildings which were the palaces of the kings are in ruins, and extend from the mountain to the plain where the city is built, as far as the borders of the lake,

(z) Herodotus Euterpe.

(a) Strabo, lib. 17.

(b) I marked its scite in Letter VIII.

“ shaded

“ shaded by a sacred grove. Forty stadia
“ from Memphis is a rocky hill, where a
“ great number of pyramids are built.”

That Strabo saw the pyramids from the castle of Babylon is not wonderful, since they are seen from the fortress which overlooks Grand Cairo, and much farther. He adds, they were near Memphis, on a hill, distant only forty stadia, that is to say five miles; which will not agree with Giza, that being three leagues from the nearest pyramids, and six from those of Saccara. But I will not dwell on this, because Pliny removes the difficulty past doubt (c).

“ The three grand pyramids, seen by the
“ watermen from all parts, stand on a bar-
“ ren and rocky hill, between Memphis
“ and the Delta, one league from the Nile,
“ two from Memphis, and near the village
“ of Busiris.”

This passage irrevocably fixes the contested spot, and fully displays truth: for he says the pyramid stood between Memphis and the Delta, and Giza, certainly, stands between the pyramids and the Delta; it,

(c) Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. 36. cap. 12.

therefore, is impossible Memphis could be situated at Giza. Or, which is the same thing, Memphis, according to Pliny, was two leagues south of the pyramids, and Giza is three leagues north; wherefore, it cannot have been built where Memphis stood; nor can Pliny be said to be mistaken, for his description is precise. Busiris still subsists, now Bousir, not far from the pyramids, which are a league from the river. The small town Menf, the ancient Memphis, is about two leagues south of these monuments. The authors of the Universal History would have been cautious of implicitly believing, and blindly adopting, an erroneous opinion had they read this passage; especially as it had been opposed by one of their own countrymen, (d) who was judicious, and well informed; they would not have fulminated an anathema against all who doubted in Dr. Shaw. I, like them, render all homage to his merits, his book abounds in valuable knowledge; but, as errors and truths are blended, I cannot avoid removing the first, whenever opportunity offers.

(d) Pococke's Travels.

A king

A king of Egypt, having turned the course of the Nile, (*e*) which diffused itself over the sands of Lybia, and the Delta being formed from the mud (*f*) of its waters, canals were cut to drain Lower Egypt. The monarchs who, till then, had resided at Thebes, removed nearer the mouth of the river, to enjoy an air more temperate, and be more ready to defend the entrance of their empire. They founded the city of Memphis, and endeavoured to render it equal to the ancient capital, decorating it with many temples, (*g*) among which that of Vulcan drew the attention of travellers: its grandeur, sumptuousness, and rich ornaments, each excited admiration. Another temple, beside the barren

(*e*) See Letter I.

(*f*) Though history, which proves the Delta formed from the sands and mire of the Nile, no longer subsisted, and though we should reject the opinions of Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus, Pliny, &c. who affirm the fact, we could not but admit it; having considered this fine part of Egypt. Throughout the Delta, no other stones are found than those brought for the building of temples, and grand edifices; nor is any thing to be obtained but the black mud of the Nile, mixed with sand, by digging in any part whatever twenty feet deep.

(*g*) Strabo, lib. 17.

plain, was dedicated to Serapis, the principal entrance to which was a vast Sphynx avenue. Egypt has always been oppressed with sands, which, accumulating here, had half buried some of the sphynx, and others up to the neck, in the time of Strabo; at present they have disappeared. To prevent this disaster, they built a long mound, (*b*) on the South side, which also served as a barrier against the inundations of the river, and the attacks of enemies. The palace of the kings, and a fortress built on the mountain, defended it on the West, the Nile on the East, and to the North were lakes, beyond which was the plain of mummies, and the causeway which led from Busiris to the great pyramids. Thus situated, Memphis commanded the valley of Egypt, and communicated by canals with the lakes Mœris, and Mareotis. Its citizens might traverse the kingdom in boats, and it, therefore, became the centre of wealth, commerce, and arts, where astronomy and geometry, invented by the Egyptians, flourished. (*i*) Hither the Greeks came to obtain knowledge, which, carrying into their own coun-

(*b*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(*i*) Strabo, lib. 17.

try, they brought to perfection. Thebes and her hundred gates lay forgotten, and on the hill near Memphis rose those proud monuments, those superb mausoleums, which, alone, of the wonders of the world, have braved destructive time, and men still more destructive. The glory of Memphis endured for ages, till Cambyses came, at the head of a formidable army, and laid Egypt desolate ; by this ferocious conqueror were her temples and famous edifices destroyed. This was his endeavour, as it was to extinguish the sciences, which a people, surrounded by waters and deserts, had, in their fertile valley, first invented. With their privileges the priests lost a part of the knowledge that was attached to them. Memphis, however, disfigured as it was, preserved such remains of magnificence, that it still was the first city of the world, and struggled, for more than two centuries, to shake off the odious yoke of the Persians. Alexander, to whom she yielded, revenged her wrongs, and, abandoning himself to guilty phrenzy, renewed the horrors Cambyses had committed, at Thebes and Memphis, on Persepolis (*k*). Is there not justice for empires

(k) Quintus Curtius.

as for individuals ? Charmed with the beauties of Egypt, the antiquities of which he visited, he founded a city there in his own name, several ages before the Christian æra, which the Ptolemies, his successors, embellished, endeavouring to join the majestic architecture of Egypt to the elegance of Greece. The Pharos rose the admiration of the world ; Alexandria became another Rome, and arts and sciences, beneath the eye of the sovereign, spread their brilliancy afar. Commerce attracted wealth and abundance hither, and to the new capital Memphis daily saw its inhabitants remove. (1) Under Augustus the latter was still a great city, populous, and full of foreigners, yet was but then the second in Egypt. Six hundred years after it was conquered by the Arabs, after a long and bloody siege, who took it by assault, and, according to Abulfeda, effected its destruction. I will cite the passage from this learned historian, because it proves the scite Pliny gave Memphis, and destroys the error of various writers, (m) who pretend that the governors, under the emperors of Constantinople, resided

(1) Strabo, lib. 17.

(m) Maillet—Father Sicard.

at Grand Cairo, when Amrou conquered Egypt. In my eighth letter I thought I had demonstrated this city did not then exist; what follows is an additional proof: "Menf " (n), (that is to say Memphis) is the ancient "Masr (o) of Egypt, standing on the western shore of the Nile. Amrou, son of "El Aas, took it by assault, totally destroyed "it, and, by order of Omar, son of Kettab, "built the city of Fostat, on the opposite "shore. There are remarkable ruins at "Menf—the remains of its ancient splendor,

(n) "Menf hia masr elcadima oua hia an garbi el Nil. "Oua lemma fatahha Amrou ebn el Aas kharabha oua "bena el Fostat men elbar elakhar el sharki be amr "Omar ebn el Khattab. Oua be menf atar cadimo "azima madfalo men el fakhour oua el menhouta el ma- "soura. Oua alaiha dchan akhdar, oua khairo baki "ila zamanna, hada lam ietkhaier men el shams oua "khairha ala toul hada eldemma. Oua menf men masr "ala marhela cariba."

Abulfeda, Description of Egypt.

(o) I observed, in my letter on old Cairo, that the Arabs always bestow the name of Masr on the capital of Egypt. Memphis bore it till ruined by Amrou; Fostat next, and preserved it, till Schaouar set fire to the city to prevent its being taken by the French; since when Grand Cairo is called Masr, and Fostat Masr elatic, the ancient Masr, or the ancient capital.

" which

“ which are suffered to decay ; stones the
“ sculpture and painting of which excite won-
“ der, and whose colours neither sun nor air
“ have yet effaced. Menf is a small day’s
“ journey from Grand Cairo.”

This agrees with Pliny’s description, and with what yet remains. The village of Menf, a feeble residue of an immense city, is six leagues from Grand Cairo, on the western side of the Nile, precisely where the learned naturalist marks its scite ; it being four leagues from Grand Cairo to the pyramids, and two from thence to Menf. The ruins round it confirm the testimony of Abulfeda, and the lakes (*p*) mentioned by Herodotus and Strabo have not entirely disappeared, one being near Saccara, with a grove of Acacia on the west of Menf, the other precisely North, which, during the inundation, extends to the causeway thrown up in the marsh which separates the Nile from the grand pyramids, and was made to facilitate the conveyance of the marble for the passages and coating of these

(*p*) These lakes, which all antiquity describes near Memphis, are proof demonstrative it was situated at Menf, and not at Giza, for there is no trace of any lake within three leagues of the latter.

edifices.

edifices (*q*). The mound subsists with bridges built to leave the free circulation to the waters, and, during the time of inundation, those who come to see the pyramids coast it in boats.

These, Sir, were the lakes which the Memphians were obliged to cross when they conveyed their dead to the plains where the kings had raised their mausoleums. As there were temples here (*r*) where expiatory sacrifices were offered for the deceased, as these silent abodes were inviolable, and the impious man who should have dared profane and trouble their profound peace would have been punished with death, all the Egyptians wished here to be entombed. Each family sunk, in the rock covered with sands, a gloomy habitation, where, in their turn, father and son were deposited with religious piety, little supposing that a time should come when the enlightened people of Europe would have them torn from their sepulchres; or that their bodies, buried and preserved with so much care,

(*q*) Herodotus, Euterpe.

(*r*) Each great pyramid had its temple, and priests, whose office was to immolate expiatory victims, and pray for the dead.

would become an object of vile traffic. The Greeks, who have been present (*s*) at the judgments the Egyptians, alone, of all the earth's inhabitants, pronounced upon the dead, and who have seen the places where their bodies were brought in boats, on paying a small fee, have invented the fable of Charon and Hell. The beauty of the plains beyond that vast solitude, the sands, the canals, by which they were watered, preserving their eternally verdant banks, gave them the idea of the Styx, the Lethe, and the Elysian fields, which their fruitful and fine imaginations embellished with all the beauties of poetry. The fable gained credit among the populace, and became an article of pagan religion.

Such, Sir, are the reflections which attentively reading the ancients, and seeing the environs of the pyramids, have produced: may they be thought worthy your attention, and possess the merit of truth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(s) Ορφεία γαῖς (Φασι) εἰς αἰγαλοῖς παραβαῖσσαντα καὶ μετασχοῦσσαντα τοὺς τελετην καὶ τὰς διανοστάσας μετηγένεται μετελαθεῖσα.

Diod. Sic. p. 13. Ed. Hen. Steph. 1559.

L E T T E R XXII.

From Boulac to Damietta: that branch of the Nile, its canals, the villages, towns, and antiquities, on the banks, described. Of the fair of Tanta; the manners of the inhabitants of that part of Egypt; the groves near Scimennoud; the chicken ovens at Mansoura, where the French army was defeated; and the navigation of the river.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo, 1779.

IT is sixteen months since you received my last letter; during this long interval anxious friendship has often painted the misfortunes to which a traveller is exposed, in a barbarous country, and has more than once made you fear for my life. Honoured be the feelings which to me are so precious, and which my sympathetic heart repays. But calm your apprehensions; travellers have a deity who exacts prudence and fortitude, and, when

when religiously obeyed, shelters them from danger. Cease then your alarms, and attribute my silence to my continual journeys and labours. Yet, Sir, forget not to write to me. The worth of a letter is here fully known; it is opened with transport, read with avidity, and the day of its reception is a day of festivity. Beneath this burning sun, amid these deserts, the want of a friend is powerfully felt; and whatever brings him to memory is most precious. Seldom does a Frenchman find, among Turks and Arabs, a heart that vibrates with his own, and cowering sensations are born and die unparticipated. Pity me, therefore, and send me what consolation absence can receive; that, while I read characters your hand has traced, I may see, may hear, you; while fancy, sweet enchantress, but illusive, gives me momentary happiness, and strews the thorny road of life with flowers.—Let us continue our correspondence.

During the long silence of which you complain, my time has been employed, Sir, in making two journeys into Lower Egypt, visiting the towns and canals of the eastern branch of the Nile, and living a year ~~at~~ Damietta,

Damietta, to acquire more perfectly the Arabic dialect spoken in Syria. A thousand times have I wandered over the delicious environs of this city, not yet satisfied with contemplating the beauties of nature, with beholding the happy picture of plenty. I have traced the army of Louis IX. from its landing to Mansoura. Honest Joinville has written the history of that expedition, the beginning of which was so prosperous, and the end so unhappy ; but his narration is obscure, and leaves much to wish. The curious accounts of the Arabic authors, and an inspection of the places, have given me the means of elucidating and supplying information which he could not acquire. When I have described my journey, I will endeavour to retrace this short, but interesting, part of our history.

The fifteenth of February I went for Damietta, in a *canjai*, that is to say, a less boat than a *mack*, and built for pleasure. It contained a small, and a larger cabin, which we carpetted ; a mat in the form of a canopy, raised on the deck, sheltered us from the sun, while we beheld the country we passed. A

faithful Janissary, who had been in the army of the famous Ali Bey, and an Arabian servant, accompanied me, all well armed, a very necessary precaution on the branch of Damietta, where attacks are continual. The *Fellab*, (r) who inhabit the shores, come, under favour of darkness, assail the boats, and, if not resisted, murder the passengers, and seize their effects. A foreigner ought to be well assured of his servants, and the fidelity of the patron or captain, who, often in collusion with the thieves, share the spoil. Taught by experience, I give this advice to future travellers, having nearly lost my life for not having followed it at first.

The most essential stores are rice and coffee, which we took care to provide. The villages will supply milk, eggs, and poultry; we added some bottles of old wine of Cyprus, which Mahamet Assalama, (s) though a good musulman, was very happy to partake of occa-

(r) Egyptian husbandmen.

(s) Mahamet Assalama, the Janissary, who accompanied me, was honest, brave, and faithful. I had great obligations to him during my travels, and at my departure he entered into the service of the French consul at Alexandria.

fionally,

fionally, though always in a corner, and taking care not to be seen even by the boatmen.

We left Boulac about one o'clock, with a serene sky, and a heat as temperate as one of our finest days of spring. The inundation had been over about six weeks, and the waters of the Nile insensibly decreased. The current being rather slow, and the north wind blowing, the men were obliged to take to their oars. Wheat and barley began to ripen. The carthamus and dourra, or Indian millet, were a foot high; and the third crop of lucern was springing; cucumbers and water-melons spread their flexible branches over the river banks, and beans were almost ripe. The foliage of the trees was verdant, but differently tinctured, and the orange and citron were in flower. Such was the aspect of the country on the fifteenth of February.

Continuing to row, an hour's passage brought us to the mouth of the canal of Adrian, which ran to that of the Red Sea, traversing the village Kelioub, and passing north of Heliopolis. Two leagues lower is the village Charakhania, below which the Nile separates on each side the Delta. Here Hero-

dorus and Pomponius Mela placed the ancient city of Cercasorum. (t) D'Anville, following Strabo, describes it on the western shore of the Nile, at the village *El Arkas*.

We are compensated for the slowness with which we advance by the amusing sight of boats continually passing and repassing, and a rich country, various in its productions, and abounding in cattle. Arrived at *Batn el Bakara*, where the Nile divides, we left the branch of Rosetta, and proceeded along that of Damietta. The first elbows eastward, the second flows north, in a right line, therefore has the greatest quantity of water, for which reason the most considerable canals are cut from it, as I shall shew.

The sun sets, and our mariners dread passing the night opposite Dagoua, a small town where thieves harbour. In the time of Father Sicard, a certain *Habib*, had established his tyranny there, and, making presents to the men in power at Cairo, levied contributions on all passengers. The place is still infested with pirates, and, last year,

(t) Herodotus, lib. 2. and Mela say, that the city of Cercasorum stood near the division of the Nile, on the eastern shore, where Charakhania now stands.

a large boat, in which were more than thirty Turks, and myself, was attacked; our arms and behaviour repelled the enemy, who wanted to plunder, not fight; we therefore determined to cast anchor opposite the small village Zoufeti; and, while the servant prepared supper, I walked with my Janissary into a neighbouring wood; each with a pair of pistols at the girdle, a large sabre by the side, and a doubled barrelled musket on the shoulder.

Several rows of trees, planted round a vast field, formed a semicircular enclosure; the sides of which reached to the river. About the middle were banks, under sycamore trees, and on the right and left were pomegranate, palm, tamarind, and orange trees, promiscuously planted, which formed various small groves. Among them grew tufts of *Hennai*, a pleasing shrub, with leaves that dye yellow; the cool grass, variety of trees, intermingling bushes, orange, and citron flowers, flocks of doves, which sought an asylum under the thick foliage, and abundance of cattle, brought from grazing, altogether formed a most cheerful and animated scene, which inspired those sweet sensations of happiness

that prospects of bounteous and beautiful nature never fail to produce.

We went up to the husbandmen's huts, and the women, who were round, immediately retired. The men remained, and, from our dress, supposing we were the officers of some Bey, who came to exact contributions, had their fears, which we dispelled by telling them we only asked milk, and new laid eggs. They hastened to supply our wants, and reconducted us to the boat, where, notwithstanding, their friendship, we kept sentinel all night, each mounting guard in his turn; nothing happened however to trouble our repose.

February 16th.

After sleeping some hours, wrapped in my cloak, after the Arabian manner, the noise of the departing watermen awakened me. The sun rose, and, the dew having fallen plentifully, there was a pure and clear sky. Looking toward the wood, where we had walked over night, I saw flocks of birds, white as snow, perched on the tops of the trees, which the Arabs name oxkeeper, because they always accompany these animals.

They

They are the size of a pheasant, with red feet, and black beaks; their silver plumage formed an agreeable contrast with the dark green of the date tree. Thousands of doves flew from one cluster of trees to another, and, by their cooing, celebrated the birth of day; while flocks of pigeons left their houses on the river banks; these tame birds, never hunted, never terrified by noisy gun-powder, are without fear, and do not avoid man.

Our anchor weighed, we coasted the left side of the river, aided by the current, and the oar; for the wind continued contrary, and passed near *Cafr* (*u*) Faraounia, situated at the beginning of a large canal, which, obliquely traversing the Delta, falls into the Rosetta branch. On the right of the Nile we perceived various hamlets; lost in the distant horizon, often passed numerous islands, of which the river is full, and soon saw the small fort of Tant, surrounded by a small canal.

An hour after quitting it we came before the village Dagoua, the retreat of robbers, where the elbowing Nile seems willing to

(*u*) *Cafr* signifies village.

detain travellers. From this winding there is a canal cut, as large as the Saone, which runs into the canal of Faraounia before it passes Menouf, the capital of the first province of the Delta. It is navigable from August to December, for large boats, and I have rowed entirely up it from Nadir, on the Rosetta branch, to that of Damietta. It runs from northeast to southwest, nor can any thing be more cheerful or rich than its banks, which seem a terrestrial paradise. This large canal supplies others, which I shall describe on the map. One of them running to the lake of Bourlos, passes the town of Tanta, where there is a considerable annual fair, to which the inhabitants of the Upper and Lower Egypt come, in crowds, to exchange their native products for India stuffs, Moka coffee, and French cloths. It continues a week. Desire of gain brings some of the Egyptians, and love of pleasure many more. Ten thousand boats are upon the canal at this season, all carrying abundance of provisions, where are good cheer, music, and rejoicing. There are nearly as many tents pitched on shore, to which the most famous courtezans of Egypt fail not to come. They likewise go on board

the

the boats, where they display their talents for dancing, singing, and gallantry. Many glass lamps are nightly lighted, the repetition of which reflects innumerable stars in the waters. The tents have the same, (*x*) and this wonderful illumination, for the extent of a league, produces, on the grass and the crystal stream, charming effects. These fairs, much frequented, are not uncommon. They are the remains of the ancient pilgrimages of the Egyptians to Canopus, Sais, and Bubastus.

Joyfully quitting Dagoua, we passed various hamlets, and discovered, on the right, the village of Atrib, (*y*) where there is nothing remarkable but the name, its huts being built over the ruins of the ancient Atribis. Ammianus Marcellinus affirms this was one of the most considerable cities in Egypt; if so, it is astonishing that not one of its monuments remain. A large canal runs a little below Atrib, toward the eastern part of lake Menzala; another, be-

(*x*) Herodotus tells us that at the feasts of Isis, in the city of Busiris, of Diana at Bubastus, and in other cities of Egypt, there were like illuminations. Euterpe, lib. 2.

(*y*) D'Anville places this town and canal too low.

ginning near the angle of the Delta (z), fell into it there, and they, together, formed the Pelusiac branch. Following its course, we come to Phaculi, where the canal began; which communicated with the Red Sea, and passed the great city of Bubastus, where Diana was worshiped, and in whose honour a magnificent temple was there erected. This worship is described by Herodotus in a picturesque manner. I will cite the passage, as it will serve to prove how little the manners of the Egyptians have changed, since that excellent historian.

“ The people come in crouds from all parts of Egypt to the feast of Diana, at Bubastus; multitudes of boats row towards the city, in each of which female singers are accompanied by cymbals, and the tambour de basque: men play on the flute, others sing, and beat time with their hands. They stop opposite all the

(z) Herodotus, and Pomponius Mela, positively say the Nile was triple below the town of Cercasorum, the scite of which I have indicated, because it divided into three branches. The most eastern, that of Bubastus, or Pelusium, is not navigable; the two others still are.

“ towns

“ towns they pass, and the music strikes up.
“ Women (*a*), abandoning themselves to
“ excessive mirth, intice, by the most un-
“ guarded expressions, all they meet, sing
“ licentious airs, and perform lascivious
“ dances. Being come to Bubastus, the
“ people offer up innumerable sacrifices, du-
“ ring the festival, and drink more wine
“ in one day than in all the year beside.
“ Above seven hundred thousand people
“ assemble here.”

The Egyptians, since Herodotus, have been governed by various nations, and, at length, are sunk deep in ignorance and slavery, but their true character has undergone no change. The frantic ceremonies the Pagan religion authorized are now renewed around the sepulchres of Santons (*b*), before the churches of the Copts (*c*), and in the fairs I mentioned. Their love of pilgrimages

(*a*) These, no doubt, are the Almai, which were not then more decent than now.

(*b*) On certain days the Mahometans visit the sepulchres of persons they hold to be saints, and keep their festivals with mirth, banqueting, and licentiousness.

(*c*) Much the same do the Copts celebrate the festival of Saint Gemiana, in the Lower Egypt.

still subsists; their music and dances are the same; and, though shackled by mahometanism, their native humours preponderate, and the predilections of their forefathers retain their ascendancy: so true is it that old habits, springing from the climate, predominate over laws; like a torrent down a declivity, the course of which a legislature cannot stop, but may turn so as not only to prevent its ravages, but, to render it useful. Let us continue our voyage.

Below Atrib the villages are so near each other that the banks of the Nile seem a continued town, interrupted only by gardens, and aromatic groves. Contemplating the lucid sky, the variegated trees, the numerous herds, and the ever springing wealth of an inexhaustible soil, we say, let us not wonder the Egyptians have produced the most marvellous works in the world; they possessed knowledge, the finest of climates, and a country which asks nothing from man but to scatter seed over its surface. Tyranny and barbarism have spread desolation here; yet, what might not a people, friends of the arts and sciences, still undertake; what treasures might they not gain from commerce and agriculture;

culture, or what advantages not render science and history, by the interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics ! Excuse these reflections, these hopes of a traveller, who beholds the misery and the wealth of a country so beauteous. After four hours passing islands and hamlets, I landed at Mit rhamr, and walked over this populous trading town, where there is nothing remarkable, nothing that bespeaks antiquity. The Bazaars are narrow and obscure, the streets crooked and dirty. There is a mosque, with a square tower, which I suppose to have been a church before the conquest of the Arabs, for there is not such a minaret in all Egypt ; they being round, small and high.

Opposite Mit rhamr is Zephta, which, crossing the river, we visited, and which, like the first, was not worth our trouble. The walls of the houses are some mud, others brick ; many of them are ruinous with nobody to repair them. The inhabitants appear miserable, and it is visible that not for them is the fatness of the surrounding lands.

The sun rose, and we, continuing our route, saw villages in the same abundance ; much more so on this branch than on that of Rosetta ; which

we must attribute to the destruction of several cities, formerly, in the eastern part of the Delta. As they became desolate, the repairing of the canals was neglected, the lands uncultivated, and the people coming nearer the river, have there fixed their habitations. How many barren fields would a good government give back to agriculture! The wind contrary, the rowers fatigued, and night approaching, we cast anchor between an island and Mit Demsis, a place not too safe, but we determined to keep good watch.

Feb. 17th.

While we quietly slept, two swimmers, under favour of darkness, approached the boat, toward midnight. Our sentinel, the janissary, perceiving them, by star light, gave the alarm, and fired his musket. They disappeared, and, the noise waking us, we ran to arms; but he calmed our fears by informing us of the truth. So adroit are these thieves that, finding the passengers asleep, they swim away with a part of their effects, and even with large packets: if surprised, they dive, and elude pursuit. This alarm kept us awake all night, and to charm away drowsiness, Mahomet Assalama recounted

recounted the battles of Ali Bey, which were enlivened by large cups of Moca coffee, occasionally emptied by us, and drank here at all hours. The Turks think it braces, and hold it necessary in a country where, relaxed by heat, the stomach scarcely can perform its functions ; for this reason they call it *Cabouai* (*d*), signifying strength. Be this as it may, the Egyptians commonly drink three cups a day, and often much more, without any of the terrible effects European physicians have attributed to coffee.

Slow coming day at length appeared, and the rising sun was more pale than usual, which betokened a south wind, and which soon rising, we set sail. As we passed, we perceived a canal, beginning below Mit Demsis, and taking its course towards the lake Menzala. The wind freshening, our bark, swiftly, cut the waves, and we presently came to the village of Bousir (*e*), on the western bank of

(*d*) The Arabs call it *Boun*, when in grain, and *Cabouai* when ground. From *Cabouai* the Europeans have formed the word coffee.

(*e*) Abulfeda enumerates four cities so named in Upper, and one in Lower Egypt, which is that I speak of, called, to distinguish it, *Bousir Bana*.

Herodotus,

of the Nile, two leagues from Semennoud, perfectly according in situation with that which Herodotus and Strabo give to the ancient city of Busiris the capital of a Nomos ; prodigious multitudes of people were drawn hither by the stately temple, consecrated to Isis, the Grecian Ceres, this being one of the most frequented pilgrimages of Egypt. Not a vestige of ancient splendour can be seen at Bousir ; standing beside the river, no doubt, the precious marbles of the temple have been carried off ; and it may be, also, that some remains might be found under the huts that have since been built there.

A league below Bousir, we saw the mouth of a canal, which, joining an arm of that of Menouf, passed near Mehallai, and flowed toward lake Bourlos (f). A little farther I perceived

Herodotus, lib. 2. and Strabo, lib. 17. place Busiris above Scenennytus, now Semennoud, proceeding up the river, which is the present position of Bousir.

Strabo, speaking of this place, affirms the fables told of the cruel Busiris have no foundation whatever, that Egypt never had a king so called, and that malice had invented them in return for the inhospitality of the Egyptians, who did not love strangers. Lib. 17.

(f) So called by mariners, as is the cape which makes its headland.

perceived a small wood, where, in a former voyage, I had landed; and, as the situation was charming, I was determined to dine there; accordingly we went on shore. A long row of willows of Babylon, strong and tall, extends along the river bank; the flexible branches dip in the waters. Behind these are pomegranates, which, planted in quincunx, and forming a pleasant grove, is surrounded by a canal. From the Nile, at the far end, is a field, various in its productions, and terminated by huts, among which was the orange tree, in bloom. Seated beneath the willows upon the river bank, before us was an island dividing its stream, the verdant grass of which attracted the eye: on the opposite shore, were the villages Salania, Mit Abulhari, and Gerah, separated only by clusters of date and orange trees, and some fields of pulse and grain. On the right, Bousir might just be perceived; and, on the left, the town of Semennoud, with its lofty minarets. I never beheld a more agreeable situation. The verdure, flowers, foliage, villages, towns, waters, earth, and heavens, all gave pleasure to the sight. We dined in this delightful spot, where I twice have stopped, and twice

having felt that involuntary charm, that pure and tranquil content, that expansion of the soul, which the beauties of nature so powerfully excite, by the grateful superabundance she sheds: happy he, who at such a moment finds a sympathizing heart, to which he can communicate, and by the communication inspire, similar sensations. West of this wood, a league and a half, is Mehalla el Kebira, capital of Garbia, the second province of the Delta, and the residence of a Bey. This town is called Kebira the Great, because the Delta contains not any more considerable. It has a manufactory of cloth, and sal-ammoniac, and a great trade; the surrounding rivers serving to transport its merchandize over all Egypt. The country round contains numerous villages, herds, and the productions of land ever fertile. Mehalla has replaced the cities of Sebennytus and Busiris, but not their magnificence: it contains no remarkable edifice.

While we tranquilly were seated on the river bank, a violent south-east wind rose, blew a storm, and raised clouds of fine and scorching dust, which obscured the heavens, and spread a gloomy paleness over the face of nature.

nature. This veil of darkness, through which the sun appeared like blood, continued about two hours. When such like whirlwinds surprise the traveller in the desert, he soon is buried, if not sheltered by a tent, and, if the tempest continues long, even this asylum becomes his grave; the tent and himself both being entombed under a hill of sand. The wind fell, the sky cleared, and, gaining our boat, we proceeded to Semennoud.

This was the ancient Sebennytus, the capital of a Nomos; it is a middle sized, populous, trading place, where bazaars, well supplied, afford various commodities, tolerably cheap. Except mosques, all the buildings are of brick; nor could I discover any antiquities. Half a league north of Semennoud is the canal of Thebania, carried to the lake Bourlos, near the ruins of Butis the Great; (g) which city had two temples, dedicated to Apollo and Diana, and was famous also for the oracle of Latona, which all Egypt came to consult. The temple of this goddess was vast and magnificent, and surrounded by a portico fifty feet high, resting on marble columns;

(g) Herodotus Euterpe.

a rock of granite, (b) its outward surface sixty feet square, formed a sanctuary, hollowed in it by the mallet and chissel; and a stome of equal surface, and six feet thick, covered it entirely. No modern travellers have visited Butis, because it would be exceedingly dangerous; wherefore we cannot affirm the description of Herodotus to be exact: however, having seen the column of Alexandria, and other monuments, not less surprizing, we are led to believe this historian, who had been on the spot, has not imposed upon posterity.

A league and a half from Semennoud, near the canal of Thebania, is a large mount, covered with ruins, called by Pococke, and father Sicard, *Bba Beit*, house of beauty; the Turks in my company named it *Hajar Beit*, house of stone; be this as it may, these are the ruins of a grand temple, wholly of marble; the walls, ten feet thick at the bottom, were of red spotted granite, found in

(b) This enormous rock, two hundred and forty feet in circumference, was brought from a quarry in the isle of Philæ, near the cataracts, on rafts, for the space of two hundred leagues, to its destined place, and, without contradiction, was the heaviest weight ever moved by human power.

the

the quarries of Syene, and which bears a perfect polish. The columns, four feet in diameter, had the head of Isis for their capitals. Among these remains are fragments of the fine marble statues which embellished this stately edifice. The stones are full of hieroglyphics, among which are men with pointed bonnets, youthful women, birds, and various animals, all admirably sculptured, excellent in their attitudes, and more pure in their taste, and perfect, than any other of the Egyptian sculpture. These fine ruins are abandoned to the Turks, who daily come and carry off blocks of marble, or saw columns in pieces to make mill-stones.

Pococke and father Sicard agree in saying this temple was built by Busiris, in honour of Isis; but its scite does not correspond with that attributed by Herodotus and Strabo to this city, which, as I have said, stood two leagues above Semennoud, where the village of Bousir now stands. I rather think, with D'Anville, the edifice in question was in the city of Isis itself, which Pliny and Stephen of Bysantium placed towards the bottom of the Delta. Were Egypt not subject to barbarians, might it be searched, many doubts

would be removed, which obscure the ancient history of the country. After every possible assistance, there are points on which we only can approach, but never dare flatter ourselves with having attained, the truth.

Returning from our walks toward evening, Mahamet Affalamai, to whom fitting and smoaking was a pleasure a thousand times superior to all the most wondrous ruins of the world, invited me into a coffee-house where he heard music; and I went the more willingly because, speaking Arabic, I might pass for a Turk. Being armed, well dressed, and in military habits, we were taken for officers of the Janissaries, and the tradespeople of Semennoud rising, ceded the place of honour. They squatted on matted seats, we sat on a raised sofa, where the master of the house presented us himself with moka, and lighted our pipes. A dancing girl, who amused the company, immediately came to us, and, according to custom, assumed the most voluptuous gestures and lascivious attitudes, keeping time to cymbals, and a tambour de basque, and receiving applause in proportion as her postures were significant and indecent; and she was careful to oblige her

her company. The dance ended, seating herself by us, she sang moals in praise of the mussulmen, and afterwards chearful airs. This courtezan called herself Bedaoui; was fourteen, and of an exquisite form, which was not concealed by her light silk dress, negligently tied with a long sash. Her perfumed ebony locks descended in tresses to her heels; a veil, gracefully raised, covered her shoulders; her eyes were black and fine; her skin less brown than common; her mouth and smile charming; but, in my opinion, she was disfigured by two blue spots she had made in her cheeks with gunpowder, and a ring hanging from one of her nostrils. She had come from Cairo to seek her fortune, and, finding us generous, offered to accompany us during our voyage, which we civilly declined, and returned to sleep in our boat.

February 18.

Taking good care to lay in provisions at Semnoud, where are excellent pigeons, poultry, and fine flavoured fresh butter, we departed at day-break, and hoisted sail. The wind almost east, we hoisted sail, and in two hours saw the

minarets of Mansoura, whither we soon came, and, being curious to examine a city so famous for the misfortunes of Louis IX. and his fortitude, I landed. It is tolerably large, but unfortified ; the streets narrow, and the houses of brick, as is usual in the Delta. One part is half in ruins ; and here, no doubt, it was that the brave Joinville, who had penetrated thus far, so long defended himself against the Egyptians, and escaped, covered with wounds. Here the Duke of Britanny lost an eye : but I shall reserve these anecdotes for the short narrative I have promised.

Mansoura is a modern town, the origin of which Abulfeda thus gives : (i) " King " Kamel, (k) son of El Adel, founded Mansoura, where the Nile divides ; one branch " running to Damietta, the other to Ach-

(i) " Oua el Mansoura benaha el melec, el kamel ebn " el adel, and maftek el Nil ila doumiat, oua *achmoun* " benaha fi ouegg el adou lamma haserou doumiat."

The above passage proves the learned Pococke was mistaken in supposing this city the Tanis, or Zoan, of Scripture.

(k) The seventh of the Ayoubite kings; he died at Damascus, in the year 635 of the Hegyra.

" moun,

“ moun, (*l*) as a bulwark against the enemy,
“ who then besieged Damietta.” (*m*)

The Christians of Syria, settled at Mansoura, (*n*) are the chief traders, and the principal articles are the fine rice growing round the lake, and sal-ammoniac. Here are vast chicken-ovens; and, as Egypt is the only country where this mode of hatching is practised, I will describe it.

Imagine a building of two stories, one under ground, and the other but little above, equally divided, length-ways, by a narrow gallery; on the right and left are small cells, where the eggs are put; the upper-story is vaulted with an ox-eye aperture at the top, and a smaller one on the floor, by which heat is communicated below; both have a small window carefully closed, and only one low door for the whole building. The eggs are

(*l*) Achmoun was built by the Arabs, near the lake Menzala, and sometimes called by them Achmoun Tanis, it having replaced the ancient city of Tanis, the ruins of which are seen in an isle of the lake. Achmoun was founded in the reign of Elmetouakkel. *Elmacin*.

(*m*) King Kamel built Mansoura, while the crusaders laid siege to Damietta, thirty-one years prior to the expedition of Louis IX. *Macrizi*.

(*n*) Mansoura, in Arabic, signifies the victorious.

arranged

arranged in heaps in the lower story, and a fire of sun-dried cow-dung kindled in the upper, morning and night, an hour each. This is repeated for eight days, and the building, being sufficiently heated, the fire is put out, every aperture closed, and a part of the eggs heaped up below are carried above. The superintendent occasionally examines if it be necessary to increase or diminish the heat. On the nineteenth day the chickens begin to move in their shells, nibble with their beaks on the twentieth, endeavouring to break their prison, and are usually completely hatched on the twenty-first: then do these heaps of eggs, apparently lifeless, begin to move, and roll about the floor, and thousands of little various coloured chickens to run and hop round the apartment. This sight is truly diverting. They are carried in panniers, and cried about the streets on the morrow, each house stocking itself at a half-penny apiece. Various authors have said these fowls are not so good as those hatched by the hen, but they are mistaken. A French cook I saw at Grand Cairo bought them every year, and when well fed they became excellent poultry. People here say the

the villagers of Bermai only know the secret of this mode of incubation, but this I cannot certify.

Having examined Mansoura, we went to see the canal, which, north of the town, is wide, deep, and runs to the lake Menzala, below Achmoun ; the passing of it was fatal to the French army, and its blood-stained waters washed away the dead. Our curiosity satisfied, we set sail towards evening. The Nile near Mansoura takes another, and a north-east, direction. The country on each side is equally fertile, but the villages less frequent. We passed Diaft, about dusk, which place is nearly a day's journey from Saint Gemiana, where the Copts go on pilgrimage, and at which time the neighbouring plain is covered with tents. Christians and Mahometans promiscuously feast for a week, have horse races, wine and good cheer ; and, dancing girls coming in crouds, Bacchus and Venus are not banished the festival.

Night came on ; but darkness, neither thick nor impenetrable, here, is rather a transparent veil, half concealing objects, through which

which the azure serene sky is seen, and all the shining host of heaven. The stars seem brighter, and larger, than in cooler climates, and night, in Egypt, has a thousand charms which are rarely felt in Europe. Never is her mild face obscured by utter darkness, never her tranquillity disturbed by tempestuous winds, nor do descending torrents ever produce a temporary chaos. When the sun sets, the wind usually falls; nature becomes perfectly calm, and contemplative man may then, untroubled, undisturbed, study himself and his faculties. Astronomy, whose residence is in the heavens, viewing the splendid firmament, may follow the course of the stars through the immensity of space.

While sailing with the stream, wandering lights informed us of the approach of boats, going upwards. There was one, that, passing, ran foul of us, by which we were near being sunk. We immediately made for shore to examine if there was no leak, where we resolved to pass the night. This accident happened near the small village of Saoualim, and this was the second time

time that place had almost proved fatal to me, as I will shew, for the instruction of those whom curiosity may bring to Egypt.

The year before, I sailed from Cairo, with a French officer, who was going to embark, at Damietta, for India, by the way of Basfora: we had only one servant, and three mariners; and this officer, during the voyage, opened and counted a box of sequins. This, as I told him, was putting our lives in danger, but he disregarded me. The sailors, seeing the gold, conspired to have us murdered, which they could not execute the two first nights, we being on our guard. A contrary wind forcing us to lie-to, on the third, one of them went to a neighbouring hamlet, and, an hour after, returning, laid down to rest with the others. The fatigue of heat, and long watching, overcame us, and I had slept scundly about an hour when I felt as if suddenly shaked, and was perfectly awake, without knowing how. The moon shone bright, and the first object I beheld was a man, with one foot in the boat, and an uplifted poniard. I ran to my double barrelled musket, and, clapping it to his breast, cried, in Arabic, he was dead if he did

did not retire. The fellow stood motionless, with surprize; and I, instantly, perceived, a few paces further, three others, armed with sabres, and pistols; I watched their motions, and determined to fire on the first who offered the least threat; but durst not turn my head to wake my companion, lest they should attack me. Him whom I held in play having drawn back, I awakened the officer, who armed himself, and while the thieves held council, two paces from us, I let slip the boat, and we passed to the other side of the river. During this whole scene, the boatmen and servant feigned to be in a dead sleep, nor could my calling awaken them; blows were necessary for that. When I came to Damietta, I perceived the rascals had stolen several of my effects, but the fear of the bastinado compelled restoration. Escaped this danger, I returned thanks to Providence, who permitted me to awake so seasonably; two minutes more would have been too late.

19th.

The remembrance of the past made us watch all night; but the precaution was needless: we remained undisturbed. Our boat.

boat, having been only slightly damaged, above water, we departed, betimes, passed Farescour, and, two hours after, discovered the charming town of Damietta, forming a vast crescent on the eastern shore of the Nile. Numerous boats and small vessels were at anchor there, and we proceeded to the custom-house.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

History of Damietta, ancient and modern ; when founded : their scite : travellers refuted who have all confounded or misplaced them in their maps and narratives. Modern Damietta ; its extent, trade, baths, inhabitants, and charming environs, flowers, and orange groves ; with an account of the lotus, papyrus, and the fine rice, sent from Damietta to Syria, the Archipelago, and Marseilles.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

MOST writers have confounded the ancient with the modern Damietta ; so obscure, Sir, is its history ; and the repetition of their errors has thrown great darkness and uncertainty over this important point of Egyptian geography, to dispel which it is necessary to begin with the famous Damietta, so often attacked by European princes. A knowledge of places, dates, and facts, presented under their true light, will give you clear

clear and distinct ideas. "Damietta," says Abulfeda, (o) "was a walled town, at the "eastern mouth of the Nile." (p) This perfectly accords with history: let us therefore search for the origin of the place. Stephen of Byzantium informs us it was called Thamiatis, under the government of the Lower Empire, but was, then, inconsiderable. It daily increased in proportion as Pelusium, frequently sacked, declined; and the entire ruin of that ancient city removed commerce to the east of the Delta. The Emperors of Constantinople, a second time, seized on Damietta, then unfortified, about the year 238 of the Hegyra. But the importance of a maritime town, so favourably situated, was at length seen; and six years after, the Caliph Elmetouakkel (q) surrounded it with strong walls;

(s) *Oua douniat cadet medina meshaoura ala el bahr*
and *mesaab el Nil el sharki*. Description of Egypt.

(p) Called the eastern mouth, by the Arabian geographer, because, Pelusium having been often sacked, and at last destroyed, by the Crusaders, the canals that ran to it became unfrquented, and the branch of Damietta the most eastern.

(q) Great works were performed in Egypt during his reign, such as straightening the walls of Alexandria,

walls ; which, however, did not impede the valiant Roger, king of Sicily, from taking it, in the year 550 of the Hegyra. Salah Eddin, who began to reign over Egypt about this time, did not let him long enjoy his conquest, but drove the Europeans from Damietta, who, fifteen years after, returned again to besiege it. Their efforts were ineffectual, for, though their land army was sustained by a fleet of twelve hundred vessels (r), the Sultan forced them to retire with shame.

This place was fated to be continually besieged. Again the crusaders attacked it, with powerful forces, under the reign of El Addel, in the year 615 of the Hegyra. They landed on the western shore of the Nile, and secured their camp by a fosse, and a pallisade. The mouth of the river was defended by two

Damietta, founding Achmoun, Rosetta, Catayah, &c. all executed by order of Ebn Toulon, one of the most famous governors of this country, and who, ambitious and thirsting to become independent, wished to possess fortified places, in which he might brave the power of the Caliphs. These having obtained, he reared the standard of rebellion, declared himself king of Egypt, and defended it against the whole force of Asia.

(r) Macrizi History of the Dynasties of Egypt.

towers,

towers, well garrisoned ; and a chain of iron, stretched across, prevented the entrance of vessels. The crusaders took the tower, next their camp, broke the chain, and gave a passage to their fleet. Nejem Eddin (*s*) the son of the Sultan, encamped near Damietta, covered it with an army, and, to stop the enemy's vessels, threw a bridge over the Nile, which they destroyed ; he, then, sunk several large barks, and rendered the passage almost impracticable. After many turns of fortune, bloody battles, and a siege of seventeen months, the christian princes took Damietta, by assault, but did not long enjoy the fruit of all the blood they had spilt, and an armament which had cost sums so immense. Surrounded, near the canal (*t*) of Achmoun, by the waters of the Nile, and the Egyptian army, they bought their lives and liberty by restoring their conquest.

Thirty-one years after their defeat, Louis

(*s*) This valiant prince, then very young, made his first campaigns against the Europeans, gained several victories, afterward, over the rebels of Syria, and died, at Mansoura, some time after Louis IX. took Damietta.

(*t*) A quarter of a league north of Mansoura, where ended the exploits of Louis IX.

IX. took Damietta, without striking a blow. The daring valour of a king who threw himself armed into the water to march against an enemy entrenched on shore, and the impetuosity with which he attacked them, spread terror through their army, which, flying, cowardly abandoned a fortress amply stored and capable of long resistance. The Arabs, soon after, recovered it, as I shall show in the history of the descent of Louis IX. but, weary of defending a place, which brought upon them the most warlike nations of Europe, they wholly erased and re-built it, higher up the country, as Abulfeda and all the oriental writers attest. I will cite their most important passages.

“ Damietta being destroyed, they built a
“ town at some distance, and called it Men-
“ sli'a, which is become a considerable place,
“ where now, (a hundred years after it was
“ founded) are squares, bazaars, and public
“ baths. The ancient city was destroyed
“ in the year 648 of the Hegyra; (u) the
“ woes it had brought on Mussulmen, and
“ the wars it had excited, reduced them to
“ this necessity; this fortress, seeming to in-
“ vite the arms of the Franks who came to

(u) Other Arabian writers place it four years back.

“ before

“ beliege it in turns. Elmetouakkel, an Abas-
“ side Caliph, had walled it round.”

Macrizi, confirming the opinion of Abulfeda, removes all doubt. I will transcribe the passage, as translated by the learned Cardonne, for a fact disfigured by the errors of so many travellers requires full demonstration.

“ Two years after the departure of Louis
“ IX. under the reign of Moaz Eddin Aybeh,
“ the Turcoman, first Sultan of the dynasty of
“ the Baharite Mamluks, a report being
“ spread that the French threatened Egypt,
“ a second time, it was resolved to destroy
“ Damietta, and the place was razed, so that
“ not a vestige remained, except the grand
“ mosque. (x) Nor was this thought suffi-
“ cient;

(x) A grand mosque is still seen at the village of Esba, east of the Nile, a short league from the sea, whither I have been ten times, carefully examined the environs, and saw the foundations of the walls of ancient Damietta. There was also an arch of brick, of old construction, which might be one end of a bridge, an antique tower, half demolished, where were two cannons without carriages, and ruins, which make its situation indubitable. The distance of Esba from the sea is what the Delta has lengthened in the space of 600 years: this has obliged the Mamluks to raise two small forts beyond the village, to defend the passage of the river. That on the left-shore is already half a league inland; the other, more modern, will soon be the same; for the shore on which

"cient; for, eleven years after, under the
"reign of Bibar Elbondouk Dari, they so
"stopped up the mouth of the Nile (y) that
"the enemy's fleets could not enter; since
"when the passage is so obstructed that ships
"are obliged to anchor in the road. The
"present Damietta was built after the for-
"mer was destroyed, and stands on the same
"side, higher up the river."—It is in reality
a league and a half above the village of Esba,
where traces of the first Damietta are seen.
The modern, Abulfeda tells us, was called
Menshia, and it still contains a square, so
named, in memory of its origin. Most writers
have confounded the two cities, attributing
to the one what appertained to the other.
The note (z) will shew what great authorities
have obscured this part of history and geo-
graphy.

it is built runs three leagues into the sea, and, being
now almost as high as the water, in less than a century
will form a cape

(y) By these means a fearful bar has risen, named
Bogaz, not less dangerous than that of Rosetta, and im-
passable by boats during several months of the year.
Shipwrecks are frequent here; I have four times passed
it, but not without peril.

(z) Father Sicard says, "The lake Menzala began
"half a league from Damietta, formerly Thamiatis."
Let. Ed. p. 340.—The Damietta he means is not the
ancient Thamiatis

graphy. I passed fourteen months at the modern Damietta, which I will describe. Larger and not less agreeable than Rosetta,

Pococke, having spoken of modern Damietta, adds, "At the north end of Damietta, there is a very fine large round tower, built of hewn stone, which might be the work of the Mamluks, after they recovered Damietta from the Christians."---The learned Englishman confounds the city the Egyptians destroyed with the present.

Prosper Alpinus falls into a much greater error in supposing Damietta the ancient Pelusium. Damietta is two and twenty leagues from the ruins of Pelusium.

Maillet has committed the same fault. "The city of Damietta corresponds to the ancient Pelusium, which projected into the sea half a league."

Def. d'Egypte, p. 127.

Doctor Shaw copying Maillet has adopted his error.

Niebuhr, who has given an excellent plan of Damietta, also, confounds it with the ancient, as the following passage shews. "I find not the least trace of the walls of Damietta, but the place where it is pretended the Nile was barred, by a chain, seems visible. For, on the northern part, within the city, is an old high tower; the river, there, is little more than a hundred feet wide [he is greatly deceived] and, on the opposite shore, is a like tower, the upper part of which is now demolished." *Travels in Arabia, Vol. I.*

These towers, which made him take the modern for the ancient Damietta, were built by the Mamluks, to defend the new city. Finding them useless, they have demolished one, and employed the materials in constructing a small fort, at the mouth of the river.

it forms a semicircle, on the eastern shore of the Nile, two leagues and a half from its mouth. Standing at one end of this crescent, the eye surveys it in its whole extent. It contains about eighty thousand inhabitants, has several squares, one of which is called Menshia : Bazaars, filled with merchandize, okals, or khans, as spacious as those of Boulac, under the porticos of which are Indian stuffs, silks from Mount Lebanon, sal ammoniac, and quantities of rice, bespeak it a commercial place. The houses, especially near the river, are very high ; most of them have pleasant saloons, built on the terraces, in which charming places, open to every wind, the Turk, indolently seated on his sofa, passes his life, in smoking, viewing the sea, bounded by the horizon, the grand lake lying on the other side, and the Nile, which, running between the two, traverses a rich country. Various grand mosques, with high minarets, ornament the city. The public baths faced with marble, are similar to those of Grand Cairo ; the linen is clean, and the water very pure. The heat, and process, far from injuring, conduces to, and even re-establishes, health, when used with moderation ; this

this opinion, founded on experience, is general in Egypt ; and the observations of several years, and the astonishing effects produced by the practice, have obliged me to think them very salutary.

Multitudes of boats and small vessels incessantly fill the port of Damietta. Some, named sherm, serve to load and unload the ships, that anchor in the road ; others are coasting pilot boats. There is a great trade between this city and Syria, Cyprus, and Marseilles. The rice *mezelaoui*, the finest of Egypt, is cultivated in the neighbouring plains, and its annual exportation amounts to between two and three hundred thousand pounds. There are likewise cloths, fai ammoniac, wheat, &c. Laws, ruinous to the country, prohibit the exportation of the latter ; but they are evaded, and it is passed as rice. The christians of Aleppo and Damascus, for many ages established here, carry on the principal trade ; they are suffered to grow rich by Turkish indolence, which contents itself with occasional extortions. Exportation of rice is forbidden ; but, by arrangements advantageous to the receiver of the customs, the people of Provence annually load several ships. The

bogaz

bogaz prevents them from entering the Nile, and their cargoes are brought by boats, which practice is productive of innumerable vexations and abuses. The rice of the best quality, which departs in the evening for the ship, seldom arrives there, but an inferior sort is substituted during the night. The captains of Marseilles, aware of these tricks, but unable to prevent them, endeavour to repel fraud by fraud, and traffic becomes a kind of mutual robbery. The thing most disadvantageous to the trade of Damietta is its defective harbour; the road where vessels lie being totally exposed, every gale that rises the captains are obliged to slip their cables, and take refuge at Cyprus, or keep the open sea. By cutting a canal of half a league only it would be easy to give ships free entrance into the Nile, which is deep; and this small expence would render Damietta a fine harbour: but despotism, insensible to the good of nations, always marches towards destruction, and has neither will nor power to create. How strange the fatality, by which the finest country on earth is become the destined prey of a few robbers, who sport with public utility and the lives of men!

The slip of land where Damietta is built, shut in on one side by the river, and on the other by the lake Menzala, is only from two to six miles wide east and west. Rivulets intersect it in every direction, and render it the most fruitful part of Egypt. The rice in common yields eighty bushels for one, and other products are in the same proportion. Here nature, eminently and profusely displaying her riches and her pomp, presents the year round flowers, fruits, and harvests ! She withers not in winter ; she fades not in summer ! She is neither scorched nor frozen ! The thermometer only varies from the ninth degree above freezing to the twenty-fourth ; (a) which happy temperature Damietta owes to the vast quantities of water by which it is surrounded. The thermometer rises twelve degrees higher at Grand Cairo. Verdure is no where so fresh as here ; trees no where so loaded with fruit. The banks among the rice fields bear several species of reeds, some of which grow very high ; among them

(a) According to an entire year's observations, but only continued during the day, the cold is not much greater at night ; for frost and snow are here unknown. —The author always means *Reaumur's thermometer*. T. is

is the calamus in abundance, with which the orientals write. Its small stalk bears long narrow leaves, gracefully pendent, and pliant branches, bedecked with white flowers. There have I seen the papyrus in quantities, the paper of the ancient Egyptians. This triangular rush, eight or nine feet high, and an inch thick, bears a dangerous tuft. Strabo calls it *biblus*, (b) and describes it so as not to be mistaken. The lotus also, which the Arabs call by the primitive name of *nuphar*, here raises its proud stalk above the waters, expands its large calix of light azure, or the purest white, and appears the king of aquatic plants. The inland ponds and canals abound

(b) The papyrus grows naturally in Lower Egypt; I have seen it on the banks of lake Marcotis; it is a rush, with a naked stalk ten feet high, bearing a woolly tuft. The publicans (receivers of the customs) who farm this branch of trade, only suffer it to grow in few places, that they may raise the price, and thus injure the public good. Strabo, lib. 17.

The present scarcity of the papyrus in Egypt is owing to this avidity of the publicans, and the care with which they destroyed it. I have only seen it round Damietta and the lake Menzala; and most travellers, who have not been there, have not mentioned it; some, less circumspect, have denied its existence, and propagated fables on the subject.

with

with this stately flower, which yields a most agreeable odour.

There are many villages round Damietta ; most of them have manufactories, where the finest Egyptian cloth is made, particularly napkins, much in request, at the ends of which are silk-fringe : they are brought to table, especially on visits of ceremony ; the slave presents one to wipe the mouth after drinking sherbet, (c) or eating confectionary, served on a silver plate. Round these villages usually are small woods, where the trees, planted promiscuously, have an uncommon and picturesque effect. Beside the sycamore and gloomy tamarind the elegant cailla grows, with clustering yellow flowers, resembling those of the cytisus ; the top of the date, loaded with clusters, lords it above the bower ; and near its shade the citron and orange rise,

(c) Sherbet comes from the Arabic word *shoria*, which signifies beverage. It is composed of lemon-juice, sugar, and water, in which perfumed paste is dissolved, made from the excellent fruits of Damascus ; they usually mingle a little rose-water. It is a most agreeable beverage, the nectar of the orientals, and drank only by the great, or people in office. I was several times presented with it on my visits to the governor of Damietta, and drank it with pleasure.

or over the peasant's cottage extend their golden fruit. The long leaved banana, the scarlet flowered pomegranate, and the sweet fruited fig, scatter charming variety; often straying among their meandering paths, shaded on one side by trees, and on the other by clustering reeds, impervious to sight, I have unexpectedly found myself on the banks of the great lake Menzala. Here a different prospect rose: thousands of boats were employed in fishing, or spreading nets, for the innumerable birds which hither come in search of abundant food, and a temperate climate.—I wish, Sir, to paint nature such as I have a thousand times seen her round Damietta; but I feel myself unequal to the task. Imagine all the delights that running brooks and fresh verdure, all the odour that orange flowers, all that a mild suavity, a balsamic air, and a most enchanting horizon can impart, and you will then have but a feeble idea of the small slip of earth, included between this expansive lake and the ever flowing Nile.

A mile south-west of the town is an orange grove, to which the inhabitants resort, where the walks are made straight; and this is the only place where art has any way aided nature;

nature ; no where else are the trees planted in rows : here I almost daily went, especially during February, March, and April, when the orange is in flower. No words can express the pleasure of breathing the cool and perfumed air of these delightful shades. The unmutilated trees are above thirty feet high, and their intermingled branches, and thick foliage, all in bloom from top to bottom, wholly exclude the sun's rays. Each orange tree is a vast nosegay, the flowers of which almost conceal the leaves, forming together the most beauteous canopy ever beheld ! There is a small rivulet beside each row, and twice a day a reservoir is opened, by which the trees are watered. It is intoxication of pleasure to walk here at noon ; and never did I so forcibly feel all the delicious enjoyments that odours and aromatics can inspire. Here, in these hot climates, was I convinced that such sweets, far from injuring, are even necessary to health.

At one end of this walk is a canal, full of the papyrus. Entering, on the left stands the gardener's hut, and a grove of citron and palm-trees, planted so near each other as scarcely to

to grant admission. This place, enclosed by ditches and palliades, is the asylum of mystery, where the handsomest of the Turkish women occasionally come to breathe, say they, balsamic sweetness beneath these shades.

I shall conclude this letter, Sir, by a short tale, which will prove that incidents similar to those of the times of Jacob are still renewed in Egypt. The plains of Syria last year were ravaged by clouds of locusts, which devoured the corn to the very root. A famine followed, and a farmer near Damascus felt the effects of the general distress. To supply the wants of a numerous family, he sold his cattle; which resource being soon exhausted, the unhappy father, wretched at present, but foreseeing greater wretchedness to come, pressed by hunger, sold his instruments of husbandry at Damascus. Led by the invisible hand of Providence, as formerly Tobias was by the angel, while he bargained for corn, lately arrived from Damietta, he heard speak of the success of Mourad Bey, (d) who had entered

Grand

(d) Mourad Bey and Ibrahim Bey have, for seven years, been the most powerful sangiaks of Egypt; both being ambitious, they quarrelled, made war, and were reconciled,

Grand Cairo victorious, and in triumph. The shape, character, and origin, of the warrior were described, and how he had risen from slavery to power supreme. The astonished farmer found the description accorded with a son, who had been stolen from him at twelve years old: hope palpitated in his heart; he hastened home with his provisions, told his family what he had heard, and determined, immediately, to depart for Egypt. His weeping wife and sons offered up prayers for his safe return. Going to the port of Alexandretta, he embarked there, and came to Damietta. One continued fear tormented him; his son, forsaking the religion of his fathers, had embraced Mahometanism; and now, surrounded as he was by splendor, would he acknowledge his parents? The thought lay heavy on his heart; yet, the wish to snatch his family from all the horrors of famine, the hope of finding a long lamented

reconciled, because they found themselves equally strong. Mourad Bey at length prevailed; and, forcing his colleague to fly into Upper Egypt, now reigns in Cairo. In the course of these letters I shall trace their characters and principal actions, which I myself have seen.

son, gave him fortitude. He continued his journey, came to the capital, repaired to the palace of Mourad, applied to the officers of the prince, and, most ardently, solicited admission. His dress and appearance bespoke poverty and misfortune, and were poor recommendations; but his great age, so respectable in the east, pleaded in his behalf. One of the attendants went to the Bey, and told him an aged man, apparently miserable, requested an audience. Let him enter, replied Mourad; and the farmer proceeded, with trembling steps, over the rich carpet which bespread the hall of the Divan, and approached the Bey, who reclined on a sofa, embroidered with silk and gold. Crouding sensations deprived him of the use of speech: at last, after attentively looking, the voice of nature vanquishing fear, he fell, and embracing his knees, exclaimed, *You are my son!* The Bey raised him, endeavoured to recollect, and, after explanation, finding him to be his father, made him sit down by his side, and caressed him most affectionately. The first gush of nature over, the Sire described in what deplorable state he had left his mother, and brethren, and the prince proposed

proposed to send for, and with them divide his riches and power, if they would embrace Islamism.. This the generous christian had foreseen, and, fearing youth might be dazzled, took not one of his sons with him. He, therefore, firmly rejected Mourad's offer, and even remonstrated with him on his own change of religion. The Bey, finding his father determined, and that his family's distress demanded immediate succour, sent him back to Syria, with a large sum of money, and a vessel loaded with corn. The happy husbandman immediately returned to the plains of Damascus, where his arrival banished misery, and tears, from his homely roof, and brought joy, ease, and felicity.

This, you perceive, Sir, greatly resembles the history of Joseph ; and would more, perhaps, did we know all the incidents.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

On ancient Pelusium, unknown to modern travellers ; its situation, and decline ; with remarks on Farama, not far from it, where the Arabs place a tomb, which, probably, is that of Pompey the Great. The lake Tanis, now Menzala, its isles and ancient towns, with observations on its fishery, outlets into the Mediterranean, and innumerable birds.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

PELUSIUM, as I have said, stood at the eastern extremity of the lake Menzala ; its name, signifying mud (*e*), describes its marshy situation, which, according to Strabo, (*f*) was but two miles from the sea. Its origin, like that of most ancient cities of Egypt, is too remote to be known ; it flourished long before Herodotus, and, being a barrier city towards Asia, the Pharaohs made it a considerable fortress : one of them raised a rampart, extending thirty leagues, from its

(*e*) Πελύσιον, means mud : the Arabs have continued the name, and called it *Thineh*, mud.

(*f*) Strabo, lib. 17.

walls to Heliopolis. History shews us that the long wall of China, those which the Greek emperors built round Constantinople, and many others, were most expensive, but impotent obstructions to a warlike people ; and that, to secure a state, warriors are better than walls : men are only to be repelled by men. The bulwark of Pelusium stopped not Cambyses, who attacked it with a formidable army ; and the feeble son of Amasis, not foreseeing the desertion of two hundred thousand Egyptians, who went and founded a colony beyond the cataracts, had no force sufficient to oppose the torrent which ravaged his kingdom. Cambyses, after a bloody battle, in which his enemies were slaughtered, entered Pelusium triumphant ; and, from this memorable day, which saw the desertion of one part of the military of Egypt, and the ruin of the other, we may date the servitude of that rich land, which has since passed under the yoke of the Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, and Turks. A state of slavery of more than two thousand years seems to have made her chains eternal.

Herodotus, who was at Pelusium some years after its conquest by Cambyses, has a passage

which I must not omit. "I examined the plain, " where the two armies had fought, and saw " it covered with heaps of human bones: on " the one side were those of the Persians, on " the other those of the Egyptians, the natives " having carefully separated them, after the " battle. Were it not for the explanation I " received, there was one fact which would " have appeared very astonishing. The thin " and fragile skulls of the Persians broke, " when gently struck with a stone; while " those of the Egyptians, thick and compact, " resisted the strokes of the flint. This dif- " ference of solidity they attributed to the
 ● custom the Persians have, from their " infancy of wearing tiaras (caps) and the " contrary one, of the Egyptians, of shaving " their children's heads, and leaving them " bare, exposed to the heat of the sun: which " explanation appeared satisfactory (g)."

The same custom still subsists; I have every where seen the children of the common people, whether running in the fields, assembled round the villages, or swimming in the waters, with their heads shaved, and bare. Let us but imagine the hardness a

(g) Herodotus, Thalia.

skull

skull must acquire, thus exposed to the scorching sun, and we shall not be astonished at the remark of Herodotus. Pelusium passed from the Persian dominion to that of Alexander; and the brave Antony, general of the horse under Gabinius, took it from his successors. Rome restored it to Ptolemy Auletes. Pompey the great, whose power had re-established this young prince on the throne of Egypt, sought refuge, after the fatal battle of Pharsalia, in Pelusium. He landed at the entrance of the harbour, and, quitting Cornelia, his wife, and sons, recited, from Sophocles, this passage—“ The free man, who seeks an asylum in the court of a king, there, meets slavery, and chains.” He there met death ! Scarcely had he stepped on shore before the rhetorician Theodorus, a native of Chio, the courtier Septimius, and the eunuch Achillas, who commanded the troops, desirous of a victim for the conqueror, pierced him with their swords. Seeing the assassins come, Pompey hid his face in his mantle, and died like a Roman. His head was embalmed, as an offering for Cæsar, and his body cast naked on the shore ! Thus was this great man, whose warlike talents

had made the Romans free of the seas, and added kingdoms to her empire, basely slain, landing on the territories of a king who owed to him his crown ! His freedman, Philip, favoured by darkness, collected the wreck of a boat, and, taking off his mantle to in-wrap the melancholy remains of his master, burnt the body, as was the custom. An old soldier, who had served under Pompey, mingling his tears with those of Philip, assisted him in paying these last duties to the manes of his general.

Pelusium had often been taken and pillaged in the wars of the Romans, Greeks, and Arabs ; yet still preserved its commerce and wealth till the time of the Crusades. After taking it by assault, the christian princes sacked it, and no more rising from its ruins, its inhabitants, as I have said, removed to Damietta.

Farama, founded by the Arabs, somewhat east of Pelusium, succeeded it, but did not long subsist, for it was ruinous in the thirteenth century. Abulfeda, (b) citing Ebn Haukal, says here was the tomb of

(b) Description of Egypt.

Galen.

Galen. He is mistaken: this celebrated physician was buried at Pergamus, his native place (*i*). The mausoleum Abulfeda mentions must be that of Pompey, which Pliny places some distance from Mount Casius (*k*). Abulfeda adds, citing Ebn Said, that the isthmus of Suez is only twenty-three leagues wide, in this part, and that Amrou intended to have cut a canal that should have communicated with the two seas, but was prevented by Omar, who, wanting a marine, feared to give the Greek ships a passage into his states. This enterprize, though great, would probably have been executed by the man who conquered Egypt, and dug a navigable canal from the Nile to the Red Sea.

(*i*) Galen, after studying physic at Alexandria, came, at the age of thirty-four, to Rome, where his learning and talents soon made him known. Marcus Aurelius, a judge of merit, appointed him his physician, which he afterward was to two of his successors. Weary of the court, Galen retired to Pergamus, his native place; where, passing the remainder of his life in calm philosophy, he died, aged sixty-three.

(*k*) Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. v. cap. 12. The ruins of Farama are near Mount Casius, and the tomb mentioned by Ebn Haukal seems to be that of Pompey.

Leaving the Pelusiac branch, and proceeding westward along the sea shore, we come to the Tanitic mouth, so named from Tanis, a considerable city built on an island of the lake, and the capital of a Nomos. It flourished under Augustus, (1) but Abulfeda informs us it was destroyed, in his time, and had become uncultivated and forsaken.

Several fishermen have assured me, during my stay at Damietta, they had seen marble columns and ruins of grand edifices in an island of the lake. I intended to have visited them, but on account of the great expence of such a voyage, in purchasing permission of the governor, and obtaining one of his officers and some Janissaries to accompany me, I was obliged to renounce this project. May some one richer than myself, or aided by government, search this grand lake, observe the depth of its mouths, describe the antiquities it contains, and perform what no modern travellers have undertaken.

After the Tanitic comes the Mendesian

(1) Strabo, lib. 17.

mouth, so named from the ancient city of Mendes (*m*), famous for its temple, and the indecent ceremonies of the goat, the origin of which was this, according to Herodotus (*o*). “ Hercules ardently intreated “ Jupiter would shew himself to him; which, “ deaf to his prayer, the God refused. At “ length, overcome by his intercessions, he “ consented, on condition it should be in “ the form of a goat; and, covering him- “ self with the skin of that animal, he ap- “ peared to the hero. The Egyptians to “ preserve the memory of this event, repre- “ sent Jupiter with the head of a goat. “ When the sacred animal dies, the Men- “ desian province observes a general mourn- “ ing.” Decency forbids me to cite the re- “ mainder of this passage; those who desire to “ know how far the phrenzy of bigotry may “ carry an ignorant and superstitious populace “ may consult the original.

The traveller who would find the ruins of Mendes must, according to Herodotus and Strabo, seek them not far from the canal of

(*m*) An Egyptian word, signifying goat. Herodotus.

(*o*) Lib. ii.

Achmoun, on the banks of the lake Menzala.

Before we come to the Phatmetic branch, I have described a new one on the map, not noticed by any geographer, which I observed in a voyage I made thither when the Nile was high. It is about a hundred and fifty feet wide, the current tolerably strong, but I know not if it be deep, or be not dry a part of the year. It is a natural channel which the waters of the lake have opened into the sea, into which a part of the river might easily be turned to give passage to vessels. A league farther is the Phatmetic branch, now that of Damietta: here the Delta begins, and cape Bourlos, near the Sebennytic mouth, forms the headland. It is terminated by the Rosetta, formerly the Bolbitine branch; and, anciently, extended to the Canopic branch, which falls into the sea, near Aboukir. These are the seven mouths of the Nile, sung by the Poets (*p*), which once were all navigable, and which only those of Rosetta and Damietta now are; some of them might

(*p*) *Et septem gemini turbant trepida ostia Nili. Virg.*
Perque papyriferi septemflua flumina Nili. Ovid.

again

again be opened, but, in the present feeble condition of Egypt, they seem more disposed to shut than to open their ports to strangers.

It remains for me to say something concerning the great lake, whose banks we have been coasting. Strabo (*q*) and the Arabian writers call it Tanis, after the city of that name. It is now named Menzala: its waters are soft, in the time of inundation, and become brackish as the river retreats within its channel. It was the same under the reign of the Caliphs. “ The Nile overflowing at the summer solstice, the canals which discharge themselves into the lake Tanis make the waters soft; and the reflux of the sea, during winter, renders them salt. There are islands in the lake, built over like towns, as Nabli, Touna, Samnaa, and Hassian-Elma, which can only be approached by boats.” (*r*) A visit to

(*q*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*r*) Oua behira *Tanis* aza amed el Nil fi el seif azab maouha. Oua aza gezar fi elcheta ila aouan, el bahr rhaleb, se maleh maouha. Oua fiha meden metl elgezair tatheif elbehira, oua hic *Nabli*, oua *Touna*, oua *Samnaa*, oua *Hassan el ma*; oua tarik ila ouahada menha ella belsefen. *Geograph. Nubiens. sect. 3.*

these isles, which no modern traveller has examined, and where manuscripts and antiquities might be found, seems an object of importance.

About twelve hundred boats, each annually paying six-and-thirty shillings to the receiver of the Pacha, continually fish on the lake. Among the various species of fish it supplies, some are excellent, such as the *queyage*, the *gemal*, the *sourd*, the sole, and the gilt-head. The quality of the waters gives their flesh whiteness, and delicacy of flavour: they are sold in Damietta, and the neighbouring towns; and in such abundance that a large sole, or gilt-head, costs but two-pence.

The Bourri, or mullet, is the most beneficial of all to the fishermen, who open the females, and take out the roe, of which they make boutargue, (s) by salting, and vend it through all Egypt. The various outlets of the lake to the Nile and Mediterranean being full of islands, rushes, insects, and herbs, the river and sea-fish swarm and multiply here infinitely; supplying two thousand fishermen, and clouds of birds, without apparent

(s) They salt the roe, and dry it in the sun; it is a food well known to the sailors of Provence.

diminution. Nature has done so much for Egypt that the fecundity of its earth and waters is inconceivable; wherefore has it ever been a nursing-mother to neighbouring nations. The waters of the lake are covered with wild-geese, ducks, teal, divers, and the ibis. I have killed several of the latter in the marshes near Rosetta; their claws and neck are long, and bodies small; alternately black and white, and they feed on fish, frogs, and reptiles. Here also are many cormorants, the grey and the white heron, snipes, rice-hens, cranes, red-shanks, &c. The birds which most attract notice are the silver-swan, proudly swimming in the waters; the flamingo, with red and black wings, and the stately pelican; the latter surpasses the others in its majestic port, height, and shape; and, by its white plumage, rivals the swan in beauty. It is seen among the birds that crowd the lake, rising above them all, with its tufted head, like their monarch. Nature has provided it with an exceedingly strong beak to overpower large fish. The Arabs have found means to tame and teach it to give them the prey. The only pelican of this species I saw in France was in the Royal Menagery,

Menagery; and, though long captivity, and a small extent of water, where the bird could not display itself, deprived it of much of its beauty, yet, its proud form and white plumage shewed it still to be a most noble bird.

I have mentioned some of the principal species of birds that frequent the lake, but the variety of their colours, the diversity of their cries, and their prodigious multitudes, I can give you no idea of! Far as the eye can reach they cover its surface. Every minute innumerable flights describe vast circuits in the air, and gently descend on its bosom; others flying the approach of the fishermen, rise in clouds to seek the solitude they love; here a vast family, assembled in a flock, swim, and there others, rising on the wing, bear their prey in their beak. The continual motion, the vast of waters, gently ruffled by the wind, distant islands, brightened by the sun-beams, boats, cutting the silver waves, banks, shaded by groves, variegated by villages, and decked in eternal verdure, all present an ever changeable, but ever charming prospect, which I have a hundred times enjoyed with unceasing pleasure.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T -

LETTER XXV.

Expedition of Louis IX. to Egypt, from Joinville, and Arabian authors, his descent near the Giza of Damietta: victory: taking of Damietta: march of the army up the Nile to the canal of Mansoura: attempts to cross it: danger of the passage: and the victory and defeat which followed. Death of the Comte d'Artois. Taking of Louis IX and his whole army. Massacre of Touran Shab. The ransom of the French king: his departure for Saint John d'Acre, with a portrait of that monarch.

To M. L. M.

Damietta.

HERE send you, Sir, the expedition of Saint Louis into Egypt, extracted from Joinville and Arabian authors, and verified on the spot.

Louis wintered in the isle of Cyprus with most of his troops, the remainder was to join him at the general rendezvous before Damietta. He sailed on Whitsun-Monday from Limazo, accompanied by eighteen hundred

vessels, great and small, the most formidable squadron the Mediterranean had beheld since the Persians. The sea seemed covered with ships to a vast extent; and, during the passage, the prince of the Morea and the duke of Burgundy joined the royal fleet, which in four days anchored in the road of Damietta. Nejem Eddin, of the race of the Ayoubites, then governed Egypt and Syria. Learned in the trade of arms, by the wars he had sustained against the Crusaders, Charesmians, and inhabitants of Damascus, and the victories he had gained over these enemies, which had confirmed his power, and established his authority among the soldiers; equally politic and brave, as capable of wielding the sceptre as the sword; himself dictating orders to his ministers for the interior government of his kingdom, and answering the petitions his subjects presented, while he formed the plan of a campaign; such, according to Abulfeda, was the king Louis had to combat. When the French monarch arrived at the isle of Cyprus he had quitted Syria; and, foreseeing the storm, which menaced the Mahometans, would burst over Damietta, had added new fortifications to that important

important place. Having supplied it with a numerous garrison, provisions, and implements of war, proper to sustain a long siege, he removed to Achmoun Tanis, to observe the enemy's motions. Though dangerously ill, he neglected nothing which might frustrate their designs. Far Eddin was sent with a considerable body of cavalry, to oppose the landing of the French; and, posting himself near the Giza (*t*) of Damietta, and the western shore of the Nile, and the sea, he there might easily impede their debarkation.

The Egyptian army, properly drawn up, was seen by the fleet two hundred paces from the shore, with the mingled sounds of drums and trumpets, colours flying, burnished arms, reflecting the sun-beams, and a face of war, which awed the bold, and terrified the timid. The king called his barons to consult on what was most expedient, who advised him to wait the coming up of the rest of his

(*t*) Giza, as I have said, signifies angle, or end. This was the most distant suburb of Damietta, built on the other side the Nile. A mount of stones and rubbish still marks its scite, facing the small village of Esba. The bridge to Damietta began here: I have carefully observed these places on my various journeys hither, and marked them on the map.

army before he ventured a descent in presence of an enemy so well intrenched. Louis rejected the pusillanimous advice, and observed that the road (*u*) of Damietta was so exposed that, should a storm rise, the fleet would either be dispersed or driven on shore: he therefore gave orders to land on the morrow morning, and commanded an attack on the Egyptians, should they not refuse to give battle.

On Friday, the 4th of June, 1249, the boats, with the French army, rowed towards the shore; as they landed the enemy's cavalry fell upon them, but the soldiers, fixing their bucklers in the sand, and presenting their lances, formed a pointed wall. Their resolute countenance cooled the Mahometan impetuosity, and they only galloped about, and threw their javelins. When the king saw the royal standard erected on shore, he jumped from his boat into the sea, and, wading up to the arm-pits, marched sword in hand to the enemy. The French, encouraged by his presence, ran to the attack, and gained

(*u*) The Egyptians had so stopped up the Nile that the French fleet could not enter; and, the road of Damietta being very dangerous, the determination of Louis was equally prudent and brave.

a bloody

a bloody victory. Two Emirs were slain; which loss, and a descent so bold, so terrified Far Eddin that he passed the night on the bridge of Damietta, and hastily fled. A panic fear at sight of this seized the garrison, who cowardly abandoned the bulwark of Egypt, and the inhabitants escaped in the dark. The French entered on the morrow without opposition. Thus a city, which, thirty years before, sustained a siege of sixteen months, was taken in one day. The French flag was displayed from the towers of Damietta on the Sunday, where abundant stores, and vast quantities of arms, were found. The victors, after giving heaven thanks for this fortunate conquest, deliberated whether they should not directly march for Grand Cairo: this would have been their wisest course, the Nile being low, they would have found fewer impediments; but Louis refused to depart before the arrival of the Comte de Poitiers, his brother, who brought the arriere-ban of France.

The taking this important fortress spread consternation through Grand Cairo, whose inhabitants imagined the enemy at their gates. The Sultan's illness increased their terrors; and so great was the alarm that the timid fled toward Upper Egypt, while a

few brave men, animated by the love of their country, joined the army of Nejem Eddin, who, accustomed to the fortune of war, was not discouraged by this unforeseen accident; though he caused fifty of the principal officers, who had so dishonourably quitted their posts, to be beheaded. For Eddin he durst not punish thus, fearing to excite a rebellion in the army, where this general was beloved; but he sternly reprimanded him, and, removing to Mansoura, he was active in putting it into a state of defence, at which the whole army laboured. Fixing his camp between the canal of Achmoun and this town, he resolved to wait for the enemy in a post so advantageous, and prevent their passing the river; meantime he sent some squadrons of light horse to harass the French in their camp.

The critical moment was lost in waiting for the Comte de Poitiers, by which the Egyptians profited, fortifying themselves, and assembling their forces. Their panic over, they skirmished round the French camp, which the Arabs entered in the dark, making some prisoners, and slaughtering those they could not carry off. The lord de Courcenay was thus beheaded, after they had killed

led the sentinel before his tent. The king then encompassed the camp by a deep fossé, and made the archers mount guard at night. The favourable season for marching up the country was wasted, and the swelling of the Nile daily filled the canals which intersected the plain, and rendered the march of an army difficult, in face of an enemy who might impede them at every step. The Legate, according to the custom of the age, ordered processions to hasten the arrival of the Comte de Poitiers, three successive Saturdays, from Damietta to the sea. They were very pompous, the king and the lords walking in them. The prince at length arrived, at which the camp rejoiced. As soon as he had landed, Louis assembled his barons, to advise on their future proceedings; opinions were divided; the Comte Peter of Britanny, and most of the lords, held it best to go, immediately, and besiege Alexandria, one of the keys of Egypt. They observed this city had an excellent harbour, where the fleet might winter in security, and the army, while conquering the country, might, by this means, receive the provisions and succour it should need; adding that, the ships neither being

able to enter the Nile nor remain in the road, the French would be in danger of perishing by famine, should any misfortune befall them. These were weighty reasons; but the Comte d'Artois thought differently, and said, he who would kill the serpent should crush his head; and therefore it was best to march immediately for the capital. Louis, rejecting the advice of his barons, followed that of his brother, forgetting the obstacles he had to encounter, and departure was resolved on.

Nejem Eddin died the 22d of November, of an abscess in the lungs, in the flower of his age. The Sultana Chegeret Eddour, whose genius was superior to her sex, instead of sinking under the misfortune, employed herself in saving the state. Sending for Facc Eddin, general of the army, and the eunuch, Dgemal Eddin, who possessed great authority, she intreated them to aid her in the government, and keep the Sultan's death secret till the arrival of her son Touran Shah, who was in Diar Bekir, and to whom couriers were dispatched. Business was transacted, and orders were sent through Egypt, in the Sultan's name, as if he had still been living;

living; which policy kept the troops from despondency, and, by concealing the loss of Nejem Eddin from the enemy, prevented them from profiting by so favourable a circumstance. At the beginning of advent, the French army (*x*) left the plains of Damietta, and on the 7th of December encamped at Farescour, where it remained to dam up a canal which ran from the river to the lake Menzala. This they easily accomplished, because they raised their mound at its mouth. Far Eddin sent five hundred horse, well mounted, to dispute the passage of the river, who posted themselves on the opposite shore. Spite of their bold countenance, the Templars crossed first; and, the king having forbid them to attack the enemy, formed their ranks. This caution emboldened the Arabs, who construed it into fear, and attacking the Tem-

(*x*) Macrizi, who generally agrees with Joinville, fixes, like him, the departure of the French in the month of December, but attributes it to the news of the Sultan's death; whereas, it is certain, from Joinville, the French did not hear of it till they encamped near Mansoura, and that the arrival of the Comte de Poitiers was the reason of this daring and dangerous march during the inundation. Thus historians, reciting facts, are often mistaken in their causes.

plars

plars furiously, slew one of those brave warriors, beside Renaut de Bichiers, their marshal. Indignant at the sight, and incapable of restraining his ardour, he exclaimed, “Upon “them, in the name of God ; I can bear no “more.” The whole corps immediately was in motion, and fell on the Egyptians, whose ranks, unable to sustain the shock, were broken ; part of them were slain, and the rest driven into the river, where they perished. This success unfortunately encouraged disobedience, which occasioned all the consequent disgrace of the French.

The army encamped, the same day at Sherimfah, a village not far distant, without molestation from the enemy ; its march was slow, because arms of the river, or large rivulets, were continually to be dammed up. It next encamped at Baramoun, and did not appear at Mansoura till the 19th of December. Between the town and the French was the canal of Achmoun, which must be passed to attack the enemy, entrenched on the opposite side ; (y) and in order to gain possession of this important place. A fleet

(y) In the map accompanying the fine edition of Joinville, printed at the Louvre, by order of the king, the

A fleet of large boats accompanied the army, which it plentifully supplied. They fought by land and water. The canal of Achmoun is as wide as the Saone, and much deeper: its banks in general are steep, and it was impossible to pass it by swimming in ~~face~~ of the whole force of Egypt. They, therefore, determined to throw up a mound; and balistæ, and other machines, proper to throw stones, were erected, as were two wooden towers, with covered galleries, to protect the workmen; but, instead of beginning at the mouth of the canal, as at Farescour, they went half a league below, which rendered their enterprize impossible; for, as they advanced, the Egyptians made deep cuts, which, suddenly bearing the waters against the mound, destroyed, in a moment, the work of several weeks. Ill success did not deter the engineers, who obstinately continued the plan they began with. While the work was pursued with zeal, Facr Eddin, secretly, landed troops at Sherimsah, who unexpectedly

the canal of Achmoun is placed beyond Mansoura, contrary to truth, and history. The French must have come from Upper Egypt to besiege this town, if so; or they would not have met with this canal on their passage. attacked

attacked the camp, and occasioned some disorder. Joinville, who, with the Templars, guarded the Damietta side, hastily armed, and repelled the enemy. This induced Louis to cut a fossé from the canal of Achmoun to the Nile, which gave security to the camp.

The fruitless labours of the mound were continued. The enemy, grown bold, a second time attacked the camp, and, after an obstinate fight, were repelled, with loss, by the Comte d'Anjou. They then fell on the part defended by the Comte de Poitiers, but a vigorous resistance again obliged them to retire. Notwithstanding these repulses the Arab horse continually skirted the army, and seized on all stragglers. The impracticable mound was not completed; the Egyptians showered stones on the workmen, and gave still greater annoyance by the greek-fire, which they several times cast, and burnt the towers and galleries, in defiance of the efforts of the French. Joinville, who was on guard one night at the mound, gives a terrifying description of the greek-fire. "The fire they cast was as large as a tun, with a long burning tail; its noise in the air was like thunder, and it seemed a flying dragon.

" The

“ The light it gave was so great that I could see throughout the camp as clearly as in open day.” This artificial fire consumed the body on which it fell, without a possibility of its being extinguished ; yet the burning the towers and galleries made them ~~not~~ abandon an ill-conceived project. Wood was collected, from the boats, to build new works, which underwent the like fate, in spite of the valour of the French. This last misfortune spread desolation through the camp, and all hope of passing the canal was given up. While they deliberated on returning to Damietta, the constable, Hymbert de Beaujeu, came to tell the king a Bedaouin (z) had promised to discover a ford, if they would give him five hundred besans of gold. Louis consented ; the ford was found ; and the Duke of Burgundy was left to guard the camp, while the king and his three brothers went to combat the Egyptians. On the 8th of February, 1250, the French cavalry, guided by the Bedaouin, assembled, by day-break, before the ford, two leagues distant from the Nile, and, entering the waters, which were

(z) Bedaouin comes from Bedaoui, inhabitant of the Desert : the wandering Arabs are so called.

deep, the (*a*) horses swam as far as the middle of the canal ; but, finding footing, they soon reached the opposite bank ; though several were drowned in this dangerous passage, among whom was John of Orleans. Some three hundred Arabs, who defended the pass, were soon put to flight. The king commanded the Templars to lead the van, and the Comte d'Artois, with his corps to sustain them. But this prince, seeing the enemy fly, could not moderate his ardour, and pursued. The grand master of the Templars sent to beg that he would wait, for that it was his right to march first, conjuring the prince not to dishonour him by taking a post confided to his valour. Without daring to reply, the Comte listened to the remonstrances ; but, unfortunately, Fourcaut du Merne, his brave squire, who held the bridle of his horse, was deaf, and, not hearing what was said to the prince, continued advancing, and calling aloud “ Upon them ! ” Perceiving this, and thinking their honour at stake, if they did not hold

(*a*) Joinville and Macrizi both say the Nile was then at its highest, which is extraordinary, for that was the season when the waters should have been low. Arabian history, indeed, contains similar examples, and the inundation has been known a month or two later than usual. *their*

their rank, the Templars spurred their horses, and galloped toward the enemy. Terrified at this unforeseen attack, the Egyptians fled on all sides, abandoning their camp; while these brave, but imprudent, cavaliers, vanquishing all who resisted, came to Mansoura, forced one of the gates, and entered the city. Faqr Eddin, who was then at the bath, scarce had time to dress himself and mount a horse, without saddle or bridle. Collecting some of his slaves to oppose the torrent, he and they were slain. So sudden was the attack, and the rout so rapid, that the Comte d'Arteis and the Templars were in Mansoura before a part of the army had passed the ford. Had the troops been all united, and the victors sustained, the defeat would have been general, and Mansoura, and, perhaps, all Egypt, conquered. But there was a space of two leagues between the van and the rear of the French army. Bibars Elbondoux Dari, chief of the Baharites, (b) saw

(b) Nejem Eddin had besieged Napoli, a town in Syria, where, his troops flying, the Baharite slaves sustained the shock of the enemy, and gave the prince time to escape. This service gained his confidence, and, succeeding

saw the error, and profited by it like an able general, rallying the fugitives, assembling the flower of the Egyptian cavalry, and throwing himself between the city and the main body of the French to prevent all communication. While he fought divided troops, and stopped the passage of Louis the Comte de Poitiers and the Comte d'Anjou, the Egyptians, animated by his example, took courage, and attacked the too hasty cavaliers, who were combating in the narrow streets of Mansoura. They were excellently seconded by the inha-

ceeding to the throne of Egypt, soon after, instead of his brother, Melec Eladai Seif Eddin, he bestowed many favours on them, and raised them to the first employments. Quitting the castle of Salah Eddin, the former residence of the Sultans, to inhabit that he had built in the isle of Raouda, opposite Old Cairo, he appointed his favourite slaves to guard it ; and, as the Arabs call great rivers Bahar, or sea, they took the name of Baharites, or maritime. Having assassinated Touran Shah, the last of the family of the Ayoubites, they reigned over Egypt and Syria a hundred and thirty-six years, and had twenty-seven kings. They were Turks, originally, bought of Syrian merchants, by Nejem Eddin, and were dethroned, in their turn, by the Mamluks, or Circassian slaves, in the year 784 of the Hegyra, who formed a new dynasty, which continued till the conquest of Egypt by Selim, in the year 923 of the Hegyra.

bitants,

bitants who showered stones on them from the tops of their houses. The French sunk under the general assault; two thirds of the Templars, and near three hundred knights, perished; the Comte d'Artois, after performing wonders, fell, covered with wounds, amidst a heap of dead, an unhappy victim to his own disobedience of orders: with him fell most of his officers. Joinville, and several brave knights, took refuge in an old house, valourously defending themselves against hosts of enemies, but with little hope of escaping death, most of them being dangerously wounded. In this extreme peril, Erart de Severey, who had been cut in the face with a sabre, and bled excessively, said, "Knights, if you will shield the memory of me and my descendants from all blame, I will go and demand aid from the Comte d'Anjou, whom I perceive yonder in the plain." All applauding his resolution, he mounted his horse, galloped through squadrons of the enemy, and came to the prince; who, hearing the news he brought, went to the relief of Joinville and the rest. Thus were they indebted for life to this gentleman; who, almost dying, dreaded a dishonourable grave for having

abandoned his companions, though it was only to bring them succour.

The corps which the king commanded advanced on the plain, and sustained every attack of the Turkish and Arab cavalry. Mounted on a noble horse he appeared a Hero amidst his squadrons ; his helmet was gilt with gold, his sword was German, and his arms highly burnished ; his fortitude, for the carnage was great, inspired valour. The armies were so closely engaged they could only use the mace, the battle-ax, and sabre. While he found employment for the best of the enemy's horse, John de Valeri advised him to turn to the right, toward the river, that he might be sustained by the Duke of Burgundy, and not surrounded, which counsel his generals approved. The officer who bore the Royal Standard received orders accordingly ; this movement exposed the advanced troops, and scarcely had they retreated a step before the Comte de Poitiers, and the Duke of Flanders, sent to tell the king they were lost, if he did not face about and give them time to join him. He halted, and, just then, Hymbert de Beaujeu came to inform him the Comte d'Artois, encompassed by enemies,

enemies, still defended himself in a house of Mansoura, but that his death was certain, if not directly relieved. Tell him, said the monarch, I follow you, and, instantly, the constable, Joinville, and some cavaliers, left the main body, and hastened toward the city. Scarcely had they proceeded a quarter of a league before a large corps of the enemy, coming between them and the king, prevented him from advancing, and Joinville, seeing it impossible to join the main body, or gain Mansoura, where the Turks were victorious, proposed to the constable to post themselves on a bridge over a large rivulet, and prevent the enemy from attacking the French in the rear. The offer was accepted, and six cavaliers undertook to keep the pass. Mean time, the different corps of the christian army, divided and surrounded by the mahometans, were vigorously driven back, toward the canal; a great number of cavaliers, thinking all was lost, hastily threw themselves in, but their fatigued horses could not gain the opposite shore, and, in a moment, the waters were covered with arms and drowning men. The king saw his life in danger; abandoned by his troops, six Turks, seizing his horse's

bridle, were leading him prisoner ; but, with unshaken fortitude, collecting all his strength, and using his excellent arms with agility and address, he, alone, vanquished his six enemies. This heroic action stopped the fugitives ; ashamed to forsake a king who so bravely defended himself, his knights crowded round him, and, as if the prodigy they had beheld had given them new powers, furiously renewed the combat, and repelled the victors.

Joinville and Hymbert, who still kept their post, saw the Comte Peter of Britanny coming from Mansoura, his face covered with blood, heading a squadron in which both officers and soldiers were most of them dangerously wounded, and pursued full speed by the Turks. The constable and his small troop flew to their support, and robbed the enemy of their prize. Joinville invited the Comte de Soissons, his kinsman, to stay and guard the bridge with him, and prevent the mahometans from taking the French in the rear. This brave knight accepted the offer, and Hymbert, seeing them determined to guard this important post, went for a reinforcement. Peter de Neville, surnamed

named Cayet, joined them ; and these three knights, their lances in the rest, and covering themselves with their shields, defended the pass against every attack. Two of the valiant guards of the king, named William de Boon and John de Gomaches, kept before them, nor could the Turks make them retreat a step. The arms of these generous warriors were stuck with darts. Peter de Neville received a blow on the head from a mace ; Joinville was wounded by five javelins, and his horse by fifteen. While thus exposed to a thousand perils, the Comte de Soissons, incapable of fear, pleasantly said to Joinville, “ The hallooing “ of this mob, Seneschal, is fine sport ; “ by god’s quoif (it was his usual oath) “ we’ll talk of this day in our ladies chamb-“ bers.” Gallantry we find always accompanied French valor.

The constable kept his word with the heroes of the bridge ; brought them succour toward the evening, and drove off the enemy. They then joined the king, who, as well as his soldiers, had fought all day, without eating. Night coming on, both armies retired. The Sieur de Chatillon commanded

the rear guard, and part of the French army, masters of the Egyptian camp and their war machines, there passed the night. The other part, under the Duke of Burgundy, was encamped north of the canal. The Comte d'Artois and many a lord lost their lives on this day, which had seen the taking of Mansoura, and the total defeat of the Egyptians, had the attack by the French been general, as the Arab writers themselves confess (*c*). But, unfortunately, the King's orders having been disrespected, the French were divided, and the address of Bibars prevented them from re-uniting. While guarding the bridge, Joinville says he saw many a pretty gentleman flying, full speed, whom no calling could stop: but that Guion de Malvoisin, with a company of knights, his kinsmen, and the Comte Peter of Britanny, returned gloriously, and honourably, from Mansoura, where they had signalized their courage.

(*c*) Macrizi, who has well described the expedition of Louis, owns Mansoura were lost, and the Mahometans totally defeated, had the French attacked in a body, and not by divisions,

On

On the morning of that memorable day, they had flown a pigeon, (*d*) from Mansoura, to carry the news, to Grand Cairo, of the death of Facr Eddin, and the flight of the Egyptians. The letter spread consternation, which the fugitives augmented: the gates of the city were open all night, for their reception; but, on the morrow, another pigeon informed them of the success of Bibars, and the Baharites. Gladness succeeded sorrow, the citizens congratulated each other in the streets, and public rejoicings were made.

The enemy were armed by sun rising, and made an irruption into the camp to regain their machines from the French. The attack was on the side guarded by Joinville, who, hearing the cry, to arms, rose; but he and his soldiers were so stiff with their wounds they could neither wear helmet nor cuirass. They

(*d*) This custom, which long subsisted in the east, is now lost; though, not long since, the merchants of Syria used thus to inform their correspondents of the arrival of ships at the port of Alexandria, whence, letting a pigeon fly, the news reached Aleppo in five or six hours. The Caliphs had established this rapid mode of intelligence from Cairo to Bagdad.

marched, however, to the enemy, who, having forced the van guard, were near seizing their balistæ. The king sent a reinforcement, under de Chatillon, and the Egyptians were driven beyond the pallisades. Eight Turks, at some distance, well armed, intrenched behind a mount of stones, and sustained by a body of cavalry, shot their random arrows into the camp, and wounded many of the soldiers. Joinville was resolved to attack them, during the night, and destroy their intrenchment ; but John de Vassay, one of his priests, had less patience ; he put on an iron helmet, and a cuirass, and, taking a large scymitar under his arm, walked toward them. They paid little attention at the sight of a single man, and he insensibly approached ; when near enough, he drew his scymitar, ran upon them, and, with his two handed strokes, put all the eight to flight, which valorous action rendered him famous throughout the army.

Touran Shah arrived, and the Sultana, whose fruitful genius had found resources, and held the reins of government in times so difficult, remitted them to the new Sultan, who came to Mansoura, appeared at the head

head of his troops, and shewed them the coat of mail of the Comte d'Artois, affirming it was that of the King. "Brave mussulmen, added he, the enemy have lost their chief; redouble your efforts, they cannot withstand your valour: let us make a general assault to-morrow, force their camp, and exterminate these French from the earth." The soldiers loudly applauded, and prepared to do their duty. Louis, informed by his spies of the meditated attack, commanded each chief, at day-break, to dispose his battalions, in good order, behind the pallisade of stakes they had fixed to prevent the enemy's cavalry from penetrating the camp; which orders were obeyed. At sun-rising, the Sultan was seen, on a stately steed, ranging his troops from the canal of Achmoun to the river, the cavalry in the van, the infantry in the rear, and strengthening his lines, in proportion to the enemies he had to face. His troops thus prepared, he displayed his colours, about noon, and sounded the charge (a fearful and confused noise of drums and trumpets) and the Egyptian army assailed the French on all sides. The Comte d'Anjou,

d'Anjou, at the front of the camp, next Mansoura, was the first attacked. The foot advanced, and, having thrown their greek-fire, the horse succeeded, and, forcing a way with their sabres, entered the intrenchments. Most of the French cavalry were dismounted at the battle of Mansoura, and the prince fought on foot with his soldiers. The number of the enemy, their superiority as cavalry, and the dreadful artificial fire they employed, threw his battalion into disorder, and, spite of his valour, he was in danger of being taken or killed. This news being brought the King, he flew to rescue his brother with what cavaliers he had, and penetrated so far into the crowd that his horse's bridle was covered with the greek-fire, and himself in danger of being burnt. The Egyptians, however, could not stand the shock of the King and his generous knights, but retreated in disorder.

Next the Comte d'Anjou were the crusaders, commanded by Guy d'Ibelin, and Baldwin his brother, near whom was Walter de Chatillon, at the head of his squadron. These two corps, full of brave knights, and excellent

excellent cavalry, repelled every assault, and remained firm, not receding a step.

William de Sonnac, grand master of the Templars, having before lost most of his knights, fortified that part of the camp he guarded with a double pallisade, to which the Egyptians set fire, and, rushing through the flames, assailed him with fury. The valorous Templars, though covered with darts and arrows, formed an impenetrable rampart, and their grand master, who had lost an eye, at Mansoura, received a wound in the other of which he died. Joinville asserts that behind the ground they occupied was a large space so covered with javelins as to hide the surface.

Guion de Malvoisin, who commanded a battalion near the Templars, defended himself so well that the enemy could gain no advantage; but the brave chief was near being consumed by the greek-fire.

Comte William of Flanders and his forces extended along the river: he boldly received the Egyptians, repelled them furiously, put all to flight who opposed him, and killed a great number. Walter de la Horgne here signalized

signalized his courage by high deeds of arms. The Comte de Poitiers was next in order; but, having only infantry, his troops were broken, the camp penetrated, and the prince seized. The women and butchers, seeing him led prisoner, began to shout, armed themselves with hatchets, fell upon the victors, drove them from the entrenchments, and recovered the king's brother.

Jocerant de Brancion, one of the most valiant knights in the French army, defended that part of the camp next the canal: his soldiers were all on foot, he alone on horseback. The Arabs, several times, broke his ranks, but the brave Brancion, with sabre in hand, continually rallied his men and repulsed them. He and his soldiers, however, must have fallen, had not Henry de Brienne, from the Duke of Burgundy's camp, annoyed the enemy with his cross-bow men, over the canal, every time they renewed the attack. De Brancion had been in six-and-thirty combats and battles, where he had always borne away the prize, and on this day, not the most inglorious of his life, received a great number of wounds of which he died.

Night

Night separated the combatants, and, on the morrow, the King assembled his Barons to console them for their losses, and excite constancy. "Gentlemen," said he, "let us return "Heaven thanks, and take courage: we have "passed the canal, driven the enemy from "their camp, and, without cavalry, opposed "the whole power of the Sultan." Discouraged by resistance so obstinate, Touran Shah, in fact, despaired of forcing the French camp, and determined to starve them. Their army was abundantly supplied by the provisions collected at Damietta, which were brought to them by the small fleet they had on the river, and the Sultan properly judged that, could he cut off the communication between the camp and Damietta, he might conquer those by famine which he could not by force. Every means accordingly were employed; a great number of boats was assembled, unrigged, transported on the backs of camels near the canal of Mehalla(*e*), and concealed in a proper place

(*e*) We learn from Abulfeda there were several towns and villages in Egypt called Mehalla; the place here meant is three leagues below Mansoura, where there

place for an ambuscade. The French fleet unsuspectingly was, as usual, bringing provisions, when, approaching the isle where the Sultan's gallies were hidden, the Egyptians suddenly appeared, surprized their enemies, attacked them furiously, surrounded them, killed about a thousand soldiers, and took fifty large loaded boats. The Egyptians thus become masters of the river, there was no longer any communication between the camp and Damietta ; and scarcity soon succeeded, with disease, its dreadful attendant. The wounded, wanting nutriment, perished, and the dead bodies, floating on the river and the canal, corrupted the air ; a destructive epidemic malady ravaged the army, and few of those who were attacked escaped death. Their flesh dried on their bones, their livid skin was spotted black, and their

there is a small canal, the mouth of which is hidden by an isle, which seems a proper place for an ambuscade. In the edition of Joinville printed at the Louvre, a note is cited, in which Macrizi mentions Mehalla, and they have erroneously supposed he meant Mehalla Kebira, capital of one of the provinces of the Delta, and six leagues above Mansoura. The French must have had their provisions from Upper Egypt, could a fleet at this place have intercepted their convoy.

gums

gums were so prodigiously swelled they could take no food till the excrescent flesh was cut away. All who underwent this operation shrieked most lamentably. Such was the condition of an army lately so flourishing. The Arabian authors agree with Joinville in giving a terrifying description of the deplorable state of the French, encompassed by enemies, and preyed on by all the horrors of famine and disease.

The remaining vessels from Damietta, on the 7th of March 1250, made a new attempt to bring supplies to the army, but were all taken, except one, belonging to the Comte of Flanders, which so valiantly defended itself that it forced its way to the camp, where it brought the news of the defeat of the two fleets, and the impossibility of receiving succour from Damietta while the gallies of the enemy swarmed on the river. This added to the consternation and afflictions of the French; and Louis, after advising with his Barons, resolved to retreat over a wooden bridge they had thrown across the canal, and join the Duke of Burgundy. That the enemy might not profit by this motion,

motion, a wall was thrown up, some distance from the bridge, behind which the troops filed off. The baggage went first, then the King and his corps; De Chatillon commanded the rear guard, and the whole Egyptian army fell upon him; but their impetuosity was repelled by the firmness with which they were received: enemy however succeeded enemy, and a part of the army, pressed between the wall and the canal, and assaulted with the greek-fire and javelins, was in the utmost peril. The valour of the Comte d'Anjou saved them, and repulsed the Egyptians. Geoffrey de Mussenbourg, who fought by his side, distinguished himself by heroic deeds, and merited the palm of that day.

The French, encamped behind the canal of Achmoun, were in safety from the sword, but not from contagion and famine, to which Louis, as well as his soldiers, was subjected. The camp daily became a vast cemetery, where death selected his victims. A truce now only could save the remains of the army, and this was proposed to the Sultan: ministers were mutually appointed, and the French king

king offered to restore Damietta, (*f*) on condition that the knights of Jerusalem should be reinstated in the places they had lost in Syria. The parties not agreeing, the conferences were broken off, and the French had but one resource, which was to gain Damietta. It was determined to fly, on Tuesday night, the

(*f*) The Crusaders attacked Damietta in the year 1218, and took it, after a siege of sixteen months. Sultan Melek Elmakel retreated, two days march from the city, and encamped at the angle formed by the canal of Achmoun and the Nile, where Mansoura was built. The Crusaders followed, and encamped on the opposite bank, facing the Egyptians, who intercepted the communication between the European army and Damietta, and the latter offered to restore the city, on condition Jerusalem, Ascalon, and Tiberius, were ceded to them, which proposal was rejected. The Sultan made a cut from the Nile, then at its greatest height, and inundated the enemies camp, so that they were up to the middle in water, and, had it not been for a causeway, must have been all drowned. Melek then threw bridges over the canal of Achmoun, and sent troops, who seized the mound, and the Crusaders, burning their tents, and war machines, would have returned to Damietta, but found it impossible. They then offered to restore the city, and peace was concluded, on that condition, in 1221.—Thus far Mancrizi in his history of the Arab dynasties. Louis, encamped in the same place, offered the same conditions, but was not equally fortunate.

5th of April; and the king commanded his brothers and the engineers to cut the cables which held the bridge over the canal of Achmoun. When it was dark, the troops began to file off toward Damietta, and those whom disease prevented from walking or riding descended the river in boats, among whom was Joinville. Louis, though weakened by a dysentery, would neither forsake his troops nor be the first in flight; on the contrary, he kept with the rear-guard, commanded by de Chatillon; Geoffry de Sergines, of all his officers, was the only one who refused to abandon him in this dangerous post. At day-break, the Egyptians perceiving the army had decamped, hotly pursued. Notwithstanding the positive orders of the king, the bridge had not been destroyed, but they passed it; and the cavalry, full gallop, came up with the French at Farescour. The rear-guard was first attacked, where Geoffry de Sergines most intrepidly defended his king, admirably wielding his mace and sword, and repelling assailants. He led him into a house in the village, where fatigue and disease made him faint in the arms of a tradeswoman of Paris; recovering, he had the consolation to learn that

that some five knights assembled round his person, defended him valiantly against the Sultan's forces, fighting desperately at the entrance of the village, where the French, inspired by the hope of saving a king they adored, did wonders, and disputed for victory. (g) Amidst the conflict, a traitor, named Marcel, called, with a loud voice, " Knights, the king commands you to yield ; " Let him not perish by your obstinacy." Hearing this, they laid down their arms, and the king, his brothers, and the whole army, were taken prisoners. Walter de Chatillon had alone defended a street against a host of foes ; completely armed, and well mounted, with a most tremendous sword, as the Egyptians appeared, he flew to the encounter, crying, Chatillon ! Knight ! Where are my brave men ? and vanquishing those that faced him, turned about to attack the assailants in the rear. After killing a great number of

(g) The Arab authors agree with Joinville, the King, by flying first, might have escaped to Damietta, but, though this would have been most prudent, the generous prince refused to leave so many brave men exposed to the enemy, and his courage made choice of the most dangerous post.

enemies, planted with arrows, exhausted by fatigue, he fell, and they cut off his head. The king and the prisoners were conducted to Mansoura, nor had those in the boats a better fate ; they fell into the enemy's hands, who forced some of them into the river. Joinville escaped death by a kind of miracle, being so feeble he could scarcely stand upright. They were going to behead him, had not a generous Arab, pitying his fate, taken him in his arms, and exclaimed, with all his force, He is the king's cousin. This saved his life, and he, with many more lords, were taken to Mansoura. Ralph de Wanon, who was in the same boat, had been hamstrung in a former battle, and could not stand : an old Arab had compassion on him, and assisted him in all the wants of nature.

Touran Shah sent fifty robes to the king and his lords, who put them on, except Louis, who refused, haughtily, saying he was sovereign of a kingdom as great as Egypt, and it was derogatory for him to appear cloathed in the robes of another monarch. The Sultan invited him to a banquet he had prepared, but, equally inflexible, he let them understand he perceived the Sultan's aim in this politeness,

ness, and the desire he had to exhibit him to his army.

Ten thousand French were in chains. Their number embarrassed Touran Shah, and the barbarian, nightly, had four or five hundred taken from prison, all of whom were beheaded, who refused to embrace Mahometanism, by Seif Eddin, the cruel minister of his vengeance. Peter of Britanny was appointed to treat of the release of Louis and the prisoners. The Egyptians required them to restore Damietta, and the places they held in Syria; the latter article was rejected. The Mahometans broke off the treaty, and, endeavouring to effect their purpose by fear, sent armed men where the king and his brothers were guarded, who, flourishing their sabres, threatened to strike off their heads. Finding these menaces ineffectual, and that nothing could induce a king whose soul was superior to adversity to commit an act of injustice, the negociation was renewed. The Egyptians demanded 100,000 bezants (about 20,000 l.) and to have Damietta restored for the deliverance of the king and prisoners; to which Louis consented, provided his queen should approve the treaty. The

Mahometans appearing surprized at this clause, he added, the queen is my mistress, without whose consent I will do nothing. Touran Shah, astonished the king so readily should grant a sum so considerable, wishing to seem generous, declared he would remit a fifth part of the ransom, and the parties agreed, and their oaths mutually exchanged, the Sultan commanded them to put the king and prisoners on board four great vessels, and take them to Damietta.

While the articles were preparing, Joinville and several Lords, imprisoned in a distant tent, saw a company of youth, armed with scymetars, headed by an old man, enter; whom, knowing the nightly executions, they supposed the ministers of death. The old man asked them, in a grave voice, whether they believed God had died and risen again for them. They answered in the affirmative. Then be not discouraged, replied this grave personage, remember your sufferings for him equal not what he suffered for you, and if he had the power to rise from the dead he will deliver you when he shall think fit. So saying he retired, impressing their minds with astonishment, and reviving hope in their hearts.

hearts. Soon after they learnt the treaty was concluded which restored them to freedom.

Touran Shah had brought with him, from Diar Bekir, some half a hundred courtiers, who had gained his confidence ; and the beginning of his reign was signalized by the degradation of his father's servants, and the rise of his favourites. The former had successively arrived at their offices and dignities by real services, and were suddenly stripped, that these new intruders might occupy the most important posts. The grandees and officers of the army were disgusted at this injustice ; but the bad policy of the Sultan did not stop here ; he was indebted for the victory at Mansoura, and the defeat of the French, to the valour of the Baharites. Far from rewarding, and thus gaining the affection of a corps Nejam Eddin had formed, formidable for its valour and power, he took their employments from them, and gave them to understand they should be disbanded. Such imprudence did but excite their indignation : hate brooded in the heart, and vengeance only waited for a pretext, which the Sultan soon gave them. During the negotiations, he had retired to Farescour, the

theatre of his victory, where a wooden tower was erected on the bank of the river, together with magnificent tents; and here he encamped, waiting the restoration of Damietta. Intoxicated by success and flattery, he indulged in debauchery, and every kind of voluptuousness. Gold glides like water from the hands of such a king: his expences became excessive, and to supply his pleasures, he demanded restitution of his father's treasures of the Sultana Chegeret Eddour, with threats, if not immediately satisfied. This ambitious woman saw the fall of herself or the tyrant inevitable, went to the chief of the Baharites, enumerated the services she had rendered the state in its day of distress, the esteem in which she held that corps, and the ingratitude of Touran Shah, ending by imploring their protection against a king who had vowed implacable hatred to the friends of Nejam Eddin. This was sufficient to rouse the vengeance of the Baharites, to which they were but too much inclined. She was promised redress, and the death of the Sultan sworn. The very same day, Bibars, having seduced his attendants, entered his tent, while he was at table, made a stroke

stroke at him with a sabre, which would have cloven his skull had he not parried it with his hand ; his fingers were cut off, and he hastily fled, pursued by the assassins, into the tower on the bank of the Nile, and shut the door. The French, then, proceeding to Damietta, having stopped at this place, were witnesses of a most shocking scene. The murderers, finding they could not gain admission, set fire to the tower. In vain did Touran Shah cry he would abdicate the throne, and only require to return to Diar Bekir : they were deaf to his intercessions and groans ; surrounded by the flames, he leaped from the top of the tower, but, a nail catching his mantle, he remained suspended ; the barbarians fell upon him, hacked him with their sabres, and cast him into the river, near the boat in which Joinville was. This horrid transaction passed in sight of the Egyptian army, who made not a single effort to save their king, so highly were they irritated by his imprudence. Thus miserably perished the last Sultan of the family of the Ayoubites, established in Egypt by Salah Eddin.

After the massacre the Sultana was declared

clared Queen ; the first slave who reigned over Egypt during the reign of the Arabs. Some say she was a Turk, others an Armenian ; she had been bought by Nejem Eddin whom she so captivated, that he never suffered her to be from him, but took her to his wars. Money was coined in her name, and Emir Azed Eddin Aibah, the Turcoman, was named Generalissimo (*i*).

(*i*) The Sultana espoused him after she had reigned three months, and divested herself of sovereign power in his favour. He was the first Sultan of the dynasty of Baharites. After reigning seven years, she, perceiving he was tired of enjoying the title of King, only, while she had the authority, and that he was inclined to other amours, had him assassinated, though, to please her, he had divorced a wife whom he loved. Nour Eddin, the son of this unhappy wife, conceived a violent hatred against the Sultana, bribed her women to murder her, and her corpse, thrown naked into a ditch, remained three days unburied, but at last was entombed in the sepulchre she had prepared. Nour Eddin, the second Baharite Sultan, was assassinated in two years time, and succeeded by Bibars, who reigned, gloriously, seventeen years. The last of the Baharites who reigned in Egypt, Ishref Hadge, voluntarily abdicated royalty. Barkouk, succeeding him, began the dynasty of the Mamluks, or Circassian slaves, who, under two-and-twenty kings, governed Egypt 121 years. Thoman Bey was the last, whom Selim caused to be hung under one of the gates of Cairo.

The assassins entered the ships that contained the French prisoners, and he who had ended Touran Shah, with his hand still reeking with blood, said to Louis, What wilt thou give me for having rid thee of thy enemy? The king made no reply. Several of these wretches leapt sabre in hand on board the galley where Joinville was and many Lords, and, flourishing their weapons, threatened to strike off their heads. The tragedy they had beheld had terrified these brave knights, and, not less pious than valiant, thinking all was over, fell on their knees before a Trinitarian friar, and, all together, began to confess their sins. The crowd being great, and the priest unable to hear them all at once, Guy d'Ybelin, constable of Cyprus, confessed to Joinville, who replied with admirable naïveté, According to the power God has given me I give thee absolution. Bayard, thus, the knight, without fear or reproach, mortally wounded, confessed himself under an oak to his squire. These Lords, however, were only thrown pell-mell into the hold, where, diseased as they were, they passed a miserable night, in expectation of an end more miserable; for they firmly believed they were only to be

released from their dungeon to be put to death. Abou Ali being named to treat with the King of France, after many debates they renewed their former agreement, and it was stipulated that, before leaving the Nile, Louis should pay eight hundred pounds towards the ransom, evacuate Damietta, and discharge the remaining sum in the city of St. John d'Acre. Oaths were mutually exchanged, and the French Lords taken from their captivity, and, once more, allowed to hope their misfortunes would have an end.

The disgrace of the King and army reached the Queen, and overwhelmed her with affliction. She was pregnant, and the news was brought three days before delivery. Her terrified fancy pictured the enemy at the gates of Damietta, where she had been left. She saw them enter the city with fire and sword, and her agitations became so violent that it was thought she would have expired. A knight, eighty years of age, who devoted himself to her service, left her neither day nor night. The wretched Queen started in her sleep, imagining the barbarians were forcing her apartment, and the old knight, who held her hand while she slept, clasping it, then said, Fear nothing, Madam, you are

are safe. She had not slept a moment, again, before she awoke, shrieking, and he again endeavoured to appease her fears. That she might rid herself of these dreadful ideas, the queen commanded all to leave her chamber, except her guardian; then, falling on her knees to him, she said, “Promise me, “ knight, to grant the favour I shall re-“ quest,” he promised, and she continued. “ I conjure you, by the faith you have “ sworn, should the Saracens take the city, “ you will cut off my head before I fall “ into their hands.” “ Madam,” replied the knight, “ this, be certain, I shall wil-“ lingly perform; I had indeed thought on “ the subject, and was resolved rather to “ take your life than suffer them to seize “ your person.” This promise gave tran- quillity to the Queen, and the day after this affecting scene she was delivered of a son, named John Tristan, (the sorrowful) alluding to the unhappy times in which he was born. The same day they informed her the Genoese, the Pisans, who were in the pay of France, and the townsmen, intended to fly from Damietta. She sent for the principal of them to her bedside, and, weeping,

weeping, said, “ For the love of God, gentlemen, do not abandon the city ; it will be the destruction of the King and the whole army ; have pity on the infant you see lying beside me.” They replied, they must die of hunger ; and she, immediately, ordered all the provisions in the city to be purchased and sent them, saying they should be maintained at the King’s expence. Thus she saved Damietta, the last resource of the French.

The ships in which Louis and the other prisoners were, being come near the bridge of Damietta, the King sent for the Queen and Princesses on board. On the appointed day, all the French quitted the city, and embarked in various ships, and the Egyptians with them, who, being drunk, inhumanly killed the sick whom their treaty obliged them to take care of till they came to St. John d’Acre. This by no means bespoke upright intentions, on their part, and, in fact, a violent dispute had arisen among themselves; the one part insisting on murdering the King, and all the prisoners, and the other in keeping their stipulations ; adding, that should the Egyptians thus violate

late their oaths they would be held the most infamous people on earth. The contest increased, and they were a whole day in doubt. Mean time the vessels in which the unhappy captives were had been sent a league above Damietta, nor were they left ignorant that they were intended to be massacred. At last, Aibah, the Turcoman, hoping to divide the remainder of the ransom which was to be paid at St. John d'Acre with the Baharites, (k) drew his sabre, and swore he never would suffer the faith of treaties thus to be violated. This terminated the difference, and they agreed to restore the French to freedom. While the Egyptians meditated this abominable act, the King was in high wrath against a Lord, who told him, that, in paying the promised sum, they had been wronged of four hundred pounds, which the king ordered to be restored them, although they had already failed in a part of their engagements. At

(k) According to the Arab historians, the fear, only, of losing the ransom preserved the King and all the prisoners : the barbarians, who so lately had drenched their hands in the blood of their Sultan, would not have spared one of their enemies, had not their interest opposed their cruelty.

length,

length, every thing being settled, the King, his brothers, and Queen, embarked for St. John d'Acre, in 1250, eleven months and some days after the taking of that city.

Gemel Eddin, an Arab historian, gives the following portrait of Louis. " The King " possessed a fine person, understanding, fortitude, and religion. His good qualities " attracted the veneration of the Christians, " who had great confidence in him : he might " have escaped from the Egyptians by flight, " either on horseback or in a boat, but the " generous king never would abandon his " army."

I have the honour to be, &c.

This work was published at two different times, and in three volumes, the first of which ended here, except a short letter, expressive of the author's hopes and fears concerning the success of his work. This is omitted, as likewise is the beginning of the next letter, being only a short complimentary introduction to the second volume, neither necessary nor interesting, which might confuse, but could not inform the reader. An interval of some months elapsed between writing of this and the following letter, during which the author returned to Grand Cairo. T.

L E T T E R XXVI.

From Old Cairo to Tamieb: Leave Fostat in the month of November, the Mosque Atar Ennabi described, and reflections on the pilgrimages made thither. State of the plain of Egypt at this season of the year: comparisons between the pyramids, the tomb of Mausoleus, and the Morai of Otakeite. Details on the plain of Mummies, the flints of Egypt and the Dachhour or Acanthos. Arrival at Tamieb in the province of Fayoum.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IT is now November, and the favourable season to visit the Said (*a*); the heat is temperate, and the flooded canals permit us to visit the inland country by water. Embark we, therefore, on this river, which, with its multiplied branches, for the space of two

a) All Upper Egypt from Old Cairo to Assouan, or Syene, is called Said by the Arabs.

hundred leagues, fertilizes that valley where the wise and the great have, for three thousand years, gone to admire the ruins of a people who exerted every faculty to make their works immortal.

We leave Old Cairo, the north wind drives us rapidly against the current, the waters have receded from the hills, but the low parts are still inundated, though the majestic Nile, silently, and gently, keeps retiring ; verdure and harvest follow his footsteps, and incessantly spring where he so lately trod. Here cucumbers and water melons are planted, and there the plough lightly furrows the surface, easily drawn by oxen, under the care of a single man. Dourra and corn already cover the high lands.

We are now passing Jeziret Dahab, the golden isle, a meadow abounding in cattle, on which is a small village. On our left we leave the grand mosque Atar Ennabi, built on the bank of the river, much frequented by the inhabitants of Cairo, and the object of a famous pilgrimage. It contains a stone on which the Mussulmen believe the marks of the feet of Mahomet are impressed ; for this reason they call it Atar Ennabi, the vestige

vestige of the prophet. The officiating Sheik takes care to encourage this pious faith, and to publish the miracles performed ; for, as his wealth wholly centers in this relic, he preserves it as a thing most precious, and covers it with a sumptuous veil, which he lifts up for devotees, from whom he expects a small present. The following account I had from a Lady of Cairo, the wife of a French merchant (*b*), who has lived forty years in Egypt.

“ I had often heard of Atar Ennabi, and “ its miracles ; and was desirous to see this “ famous stone. My dress, exactly resem- “ bling that of the Turkish women, made “ me supposed one of them ; and I went to “ the mosque at an hour when there were “ not many people. I requested the Sheik to “ shew me the relic, and two Turkish wo- “ men, of consequence, entering at the same “ time, testified the like desire. He uncovered “ it, and, after burning some rich perfumes, “ and reciting passages from the Coran, “ said, Behold that sacred mark ! Wonder

(*b*) M. Maynard, whose probity and knowledge have gained him the esteem of the French, Copts, Turks, and Arabs.

“ at the footstep of the greatest of prophets,
“ of Mahomet ! The Turkish women re-
“ peated, with enthusiasm, yes, it is indeed
“ the footstep of Mahomet, the greatest of
“ prophets ! For my own part, I assure you,
“ notwithstanding the most scrupulous at-
“ tention, I saw nothing but a smooth stone,
“ well perfumed, on which I could discover
“ neither traces of a foot nor any thing simi-
“ lar.” How strange is the credulity of
man, which enslaves his reason, and makes
him see, feel, and hear what never existed ! Thus, M. Tournefort, being present
when a tomb was opened in one of the
Archipelago isles, in which the people were
convinced they should find a Vampyre, saw
only a livid corpse, half worm-eaten ; while
the Greeks perceived an entire body of pure
flesh and blood, which, according to them,
had not the least offensive smell.

Norden, in his delightful views of Egypt,
has well depicted the mosque of Atar En-
nabi and its environs, but was deceived in
placing Memphis at Giza, though he ought
not to be therefore reproached, for he him-
self confesses he doubts this was not the real
scite of that ancient city, which I imagine I
have

have perfectly determined, in the preceding letters; nor should I again have mentioned that error, into which several travellers have fallen, did I not fear others might likewise be deceived. Thus misled, the learned Jablonski, (c) vainly, has employed all his sagacity to discover what he supposed to be truth.

At some distance from Atar Ennabi, a small village is seen, through the tufted date trees, where the Turks have a mosque, and the Copts a convent, named Der Ettin, the monastery of the figs; no doubt, because this fruit is there abundant. There are two species; the first grows on the very branches of the sycamore, but is dry, and little esteemed; the latter, the same that is cultivated in France, is juicy, sweet, and of an exquisite flavour. On the eastern bank are villages, built on the top of artificial mounts, to which the men and cattle retire during the inundation: Lucerne, sown as the Nile withdraws its waters, already forms a verdant zone around these small isles. Wandering Arab tribes have pitched their tents on the side of sandy hills, to profit

(c) This false position of Memphis induced him, also, to affirm the temple of Serapis was erected in the isle of Raouda, which is another error.

by the river, and purchased, during some months, the right to send their cattle to graze in meadows which they forsake, when the pasturage fails. Martyrs to that liberty they passionately love, these unconquerable people prefer the horrors of the desert to all the advantages of society, fly the very shadow of slavery, and, ever on their guard against tyranny, on the least dissatisfaction, strike their tents, pack them upon their camels, ravage the open country, and, laden with booty, hide themselves among burning sands, whither they cannot be pursued, and which they only dare inhabit. The scourge of Egypt, which they regard as their patrimony, they are the irreconcilable enemies of the Turks, who fear and abhor them (e).

Passing the village of Eousir, we are opposite the grand pyramids, which rise six hundred perpendicular feet high, and, as our boat follows the windings of the river, their summits describe segments of circles in the horizon. With what majesty do these mountains of man rise to the regions of air !

(e) This hatred gave birth to the French expression, *Traiter quelqu'un de Turc à More*: that is to say, with the rigour of a Turk towards an Arab.

Awful in their age, how often has the rising sun enlightened them, scorched their burning sides at noon, and gilded them as he set. During how many ages have they, keeping pace with the inconceivably swift motion of the earth, annually encircled this grand luminary ! Man then has constructed durable edifices, and these edifices are tombs ! Some authors, imagining the damage occasioned by violently opening the grand pyramid was the effect of time, have calculated how many ages they may still endure ; but, the principle being false, they are infinitely short of the truth. To me it seems impossible to say when they shall cease to be. Thousands of ages hence, if undisturbed by any grand revolution in the earth, travellers, from enlightened nations, shall go to admire these vast monuments, and say Europe scarcely had a few savages scattered over her forests when a learned nation erected these superb mausoleums, toward the four cardinal points of heaven, as monuments of its piety, and astronomical knowledge !

Melons, peculiar to Egypt, named Abd Hellaoui, the slave of mildness, are cultivated in the neighbouring villages : firm and brit-

tle, like the apple, though less sweet than other melons, they are preferred, because, during the heats, they are very agreeable, nutritive, and healthy. Here, also, is a species of lettuce, with large, smooth, and high leaves, much esteemed: whole fields are covered with them, being eaten in prodigious quantities, and their seed used to make oil. Hamlets are seen on the right and left, as we advance, whose inhabitants are tilling the land, which, in four months, will yield them abundant returns. The village of Hallouan appears on the eastern bank, surrounded by date-trees, where the Mekias was when the Arabs conquered Egypt. Memphis stood on the opposite shore, where, preserving its name, the village of Menph now stands. Strabo, Pliny, and Abulfeda have described its ruins, and put this beyond doubt. Here, still, are heaps of rubbish; but the columns and remarkable stones the Arabs have transported to Cairo, and placed them, without taste or order, in their buildings and mosques. This city extended almost to Saccara, and was nearly surrounded by lakes, which still in part subsist; these were crossed to bear the dead to the sepulchres of their fathers.

fathers. Their tombs, dug in the rock, and closed by a stone of proportionate size, were covered with sand; and these bodies, embalmed with such care, preserved with so much respect, the inhabitants of Saccara drag from their resting place, and, shameless, sell them to foreigners. This is the plain of mummies; and here is the well of birds, which is descended by the aid of a rope: it leads into subterranean galleries, filled with earthen vessels, which contain the sacred birds. They are seldom found whole, because the Arabs break them to search for idols of gold. They never take travellers to the places where they have found the most precious things, but carefully close them, and have secret passages, by which they descend. The duke de Chaulnes, when travelling in Egypt, penetrated far into these labyrinths; sometimes on his knees, and, at others, crawling. Preinstructed, by the Honorable Wortley Montague, he carefully visited Egypt, and came to one of these passages, which was closed, at the entrance, by branches of the date-tree, interwoven, and covered with sand, where he observed hieroglyphics, in relief, executed with the utmost perfection: but his offers could not prevail on

on them either to let him take casts or drawings, of the figures (f). The Duke thinks these hieroglyphics, so highly finished as to give a perfect image of the objects they represent, might become a key to those the simple outlines of which are only traced, and form a kind of alphabet, to that unintelligible tongue. Be this as it may, I shall propose means, in a letter on that subject, to attempt the explanation of these mysterious characters, and read, on Egyptian monuments, the most ancient history of the world.

Along the mountains which bound Saccara, on the west, are several pyramids, the largest of which seem as high as those of Giza. Indulge me in some reflections, which obtrude themselves upon my mind, at the sight of edifices that attract and fix my attention. Did these mausoleums originate in the pride of the Pharaohs ; and must we attribute their construction to vanity ? So various writers have thought. But leave we an opinion, which has no origin in the human heart. Kings build not palaces to inhabit when dead. A more imperious sen-

(f) Mémoire sur les hieroglyphes du puits de Saccara, par M. le Duc de Chaulnes.

sation,

sation, a fear of the future, a persuasion of what must happen after life, induced them to raise these magnificent tombs (*g*). Religion taught them that, so long as their bodies were preserved from corruption, their souls would not forsake them ; and that, in three thousand years, they should be restored to life. This belief occasioned them to raise buildings which the genius of the greatest architects endeavoured to render inaccessible ; the pyramidal form was given them, as the most durable ; which form, also, referred to their worship, by rendering homage to the sun, whose rays it imitated (*b*). If so, here is a manifest proof this ancient people believed the immortality of the soul. Kings, now, as heretofore, are well satisfied with

(*g*) Herodotus, Euterpe.

(*b*) Pliny, lib. 36, says the obelisks were consecrated to the sun, whose rays they represented, as their Egyptian name indicated ; for they, as well as the pyramids, were, in Egyptian, named *Pyramua, Sun's rays*. Vide Jablonski, tom. III. The Greeks first gave them the name of obelisks ; leaving to the pyramids that of *Pyramis*, from *πῦρ*, fire ; in which they have preserved the ancient etymology. Obelisks were first consecrated to the sun, because, by their shadows, they knew the hour of the day.

this

this world: for them flowers and harvests spring; all Nature smiles upon them; and, had they the faith of the Egyptian monarchs, we should behold them produce miracles, by which they would endeavour to ascertain their return to earth. The religion of Egypt passed into Greece, and Artemisia built a mausoleum for her husband, in the pyramidal form, which rose one of the seven wonders of the world. This supposition of an immortal soul, found among islanders, separated from every enlightened nation by immense seas, has produced a monument which may well surprize us. The people of Otaheite, unassisted by metal tools, have cut stones, exceedingly hard, and formed a pyramid, where the body of Oberea, their queen, reposes. Round this morrai, her relations and friends, with religious retrospect, shed pious tears, and the spirit of Oberea finds consolation, at beholding their grief and affection (*i*).

Let us leave the gloomy deserts of Saccara, where we walk upon graves, those high pyramids, which inspire melancholy contem-

(*i*) Hawkesworth's Voyages, Vol. II. page 166.

plation,

plation, and the lake, over which they bore the dead, that brings the fable of Charon to recollection. We are once more in our boat ! With what pleasure does the sight, fatigued by the glittering scorched sand, dwell on verdant prospects, the pure sky, the majestic river, and fields which every instant present new sources of plenty. Having endured the fearful picture of sterility, what an inexpressible charm is it to view the fecundity of Nature, who waits the man, expiring in the desert he traverses, to impart sudden delight, and a new source of life.

We are seven leagues above Old Cairo ; and here the Nile, impeded by rocks to the east, ran westward, and watered the sands of Libya. According to Herodotus, (k) one of the Pharaohs raised a mound, and turned its course between the mountains, forcing it to empty itself into the bay that then overflowed all the Delta, and thus gave birth to that celebrated island, which slowly encroaches upon the Mediterranean. The ancient bed, which the Arabs call *Babr bela ma*, a sea without water, may still be traced :

(k) See Letter I.

it is every where strewed with the remains of boats, by which it was formerly navigated, now petrified, very large parts of which I have seen brought to Grand Cairo. A long bank is still found, between Saccara and Dachhour, thrown up to defend Memphis from the inundation, if it should break the mound ; and also from the torrents of sands which the winds drove from the Libyan hills.

The isle of Tefaye is at some distance from this elbow ; here they are beginning to plant water melons and cucumbers. The Egyptians cultivate a species of the latter very small, called Cousa, of which they are exceedingly fond : it is mild, tender, and very delicate ; they eat it in their salads, but the most usual mode is to pick out the seed, and fill it up with hashed meat, rice, and spices ; cooked thus, in its own juice, it is excellent. Beyond this island Dachhour is seen, up the country, to which there is a canal, with a stone bridge of several arches. Strabo (*l*) and Ptolemy (*m*) place Acanthos six leagues

(*l*) Lib. 17.

(*m*) Lib. 4.

from Memphis, on the same side of, and at a distance from, the river; which scite perfectly corresponds to Dachhour. Here was a temple of Osiris, now totally destroyed; but west of the village, on the side of the mountain, is a grand pyramid, a continuation of those of Saccara and Giza.

The sandy plains, which extend along the hills, are scattered with stones, vulgarly called Egyptian flints. Round, like pebbles, their rough surface does not invite any one to pick them up; but the grain, when broken, is found extremely fine, capable of being highly polished, and most of them containing the figures of herbs, plants, and shrubs, so as often to form charming landscapes. These dark lines, most elegantly traced, are delightfully spread over a light ground, presenting a vast variety of designs, and different shades. There is great choice, for the sands are covered with them. I saw only one Jew, at Cairo, who had the art to work them into boxes, and knife handles, for which reason he took care to be well paid. The small hills beyond these plains abound with oyster, and other petrified, shells. Proceeding south, from Acanthos, we traverse a vast

vast country, the low fields of which are watered and fertilized, at this season of the year, by rivulets. These vallies are now covered with corn, dourra, and verdure: some months hence, the Nile having quitted them, they will become a desert. At the far end of this plain is the village of Tamieh, to which a canal is cut.

We now, Sir, enter the fertile province of Arsinoe, at present Fayoum; the country of wonders, where are the labyrinth, and its twelve palaces; the lake Mœris, and its pyramids. After transcribing the ancients, I will add an exact description of the present state of these places, the monuments and ruins that still remain, and leave you, Sir, to conjecture what they once were.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXVII.

The topography of the province of Fayoum: enquiries concerning its monuments, the position of which is ascertained by the ancients, and the remaining ruins: scite of the labyrinth, confirmed by Herodotus, Pliny, Diodorus, Ptolemy, and the remains of Balad Caroun, and Cafr Caroun: description of this wonderful place, with reflections on the subject: details on the lake Mœris: its extent, hitherto uncertain, determined by quotations beforetime used for a purpose the very reverse: its construction, canals, and sluices fully displayed; with its present circumference.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

EGYPT contains no monuments which more have excited enquiries and disputes, among the learned, than the lake Mœris, and the labyrinth; which, as I have said, this province contains. The extent of the one and the scite of the other have, by turns,

been contested. Geographers, to conciliate all parties, have created two labyrinths (*n*). Some writers have allowed the lake Mœris an immense circumference (*o*): Others, placing it in fairy land (*p*), have employed the charms of wit to ridicule the credulity of historians. These contradictions have darkened the clouds of uncertainty, and concealed truth. Let us endeavour to find her, by citing the ancients, who sometimes have been falsely interpreted, by carefully following Strabo, who has exactly described what he, like an enlightened traveller, visited; and, particularly, by a faithful account of those remaining monuments he mentions. "Quitting Acanthos (*q*) we leave toward Arabia, Aphroditopolis, (*r*) where the sacred white ox is kept." (The village Atfih, according to the most learned geographers, (*s*) is the place where the city of

(*n*) D'Anville, *Memoires sur l'Egypte*.

(*o*) Rollin *Hist. ancienne*. Bossuet, *dis. sur l'Hist. Univ.*

(*p*) Voltaire.

(*q*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*r*) *The city of Venus*.

(*s*) Ptolemy, lib. 4. D'Anville, *Mem. sur l'Egypte*. Pococke.

Venus stood.) “ Beyond the Nile is the “ Heracleotic prefecture, situate in a large “ island.” The two canals, cut from the river to the lake, the one from the village of Bouch, and the other passing near Tamieh, form this island. The remarkable ruins found near Bayamout seem to indicate the scite of Heraclea (*t*), the capital of that province. Here are two ruinous pyramids which contain only a few layers of stones. Strabo continues, “ Near Heraclea a canal “ runs, which, dividing into two branches, “ includes a small island, and traverses the “ prefecture of Arsinoe, the finest and richest “ in Egypt.” If we follow this ancient geographer on the map, we shall find these places have suffered little change, and shall be conducted directly to Fayoum, the capital of all this country ; a modern town, though a league north-east of its walls are hills of ruins, in which we discover vestiges of Arsinoe (*u*). The Arabs collect the sands

(*t*) Named the great, to distinguish it from another city of Hercules, in Lower Egypt, near Canopus.

(*u*) The ancient Crocodilopolis, where the sacred crocodiles were kept. The Greeks, having conquered Egypt, called it Arsinoe.

from these ruins, and sift them, to find seals and medals. At some distance an obelisk rests on its pedestal, the sole monument which has braved the injuries of time, and the ravages of barbarians, twenty-two feet in circumference, at the base, and about fifty high. Its sides abound in hieroglyphics, divided into columns, and frequently defaced: its corners are broken, and the fine block of granite of which it is formed is damaged to about one half of its height. Strabo forsakes us here, to describe the lake Mœris, not far from Arsinoe, and the labyrinth on its borders; he does not precisely mark the scite, but Herodotus and Ptolemy do, and fix it on the Libyan side, near the banks of the lake (x). Let us continue our route.

Quitting Fayoum, and proceeding westward, we cross the grand canal Bahr You-séph, the river of Joseph. In the village of Nesle, lying to the left, are no traces of antiquity. After a journey of two hours, north-west, a sandy and sterile plain is found; and, presently, mountains of ruins are discovered, nearly a league in extent. The first heap

(x) Herodotus, lib. 2. Ptolemy, lib. 4.

the Arabs call Balad Caroun, the village or town of Caroun; the second Cafr Caroun, the palace of Caroun (*y*). In the space between, enormous stones are every where scattered; but the most remarkable remains are at the extremities. Amidst the ruins of Cafr Caroun is a large building, several apartments of which still are standing, and full of the shafts of columns; round it is a portico, half demolished; and stairs are found, by some of which they ascended to the upper stories, and by others descended to those under ground. The attention is particularly fixed by several narrow, low, and very long cells, which seem to have had no other use than

(*y*) The Arab historians describe Caroun as a very powerful man, and say he could load several camels with the keys of the apartments that contained his treasures, from which unanimous assertion we may collect a truth. In Egypt, perhaps, the word Caroun signified an employment with which the boatman was honoured who ferried the bodies of the Kings over the lake Moeris, to deposit them in the labyrinth of which he was guardian, and, doubtless, the same title appertained to him who performed the same office for the inhabitants of Memphis over that lake. Supposing this conjecture true, we shall here find the origin of the Grecian Charon, and the reason of the Arabs calling these ruins the palace of Caroun.

that of containing the bodies of the sacred crocodiles, brought hither from Crocodilopolis, where the priests kept, and the people adored, them. These remains, lying towards Libya, a league from Birquet Caroun, formerly the lake Mœris, can only correspond with the labyrinth, to which the ancients (z) ascribe this scite, and do not notice any city so situated. Let us read the description of this famous place, now, in part, covered by sands, in Herodotus, that we may form a just idea of it.

“ The twelve kings, (a) elected by the
“ Egyptians, built the labyrinth, on the
“ bank of the lake Mœris, on the same
“ side with the city of the crocodiles, which
“ appears to me to surpass all that fame has
“ said. If we examine the construction of
“ the walls, and the nature of the labour,
“ we shall find it impossible to estimate the
“ immense cost of this building. The tem-
“ ple of Ephesus is one of the wonders of

(z) Strabo, lib. 17. Herodotus, lib. 2. Ptolemy, lib. 4. All agree in placing the labyrinth beyond the city of Arsinoe, toward Libya, and on the bank of the lake Mœris, which is the precise situation of these ruins.

(a) Herodotus, lib. 2.

“ the

“ the world, as is that in the isle of Samos.
“ Each pyramid, singly, equals, in grandeur,
“ the numerous and great works of Greece ;
“ yet these, however magnificent, may not be
“ compared to the labyrinth (*b*). A roof of
“ vast extent covers the twelve palaces ; en-
“ trance is found through twelve doors, six
“ facing the north and six the south. They
“ are enclosed by a thick and extensive wall :
“ the whole edifice consists of two stories,
“ the one above the other under ground,
“ and each contains fifteen hundred apart-
“ ments. I visited the first, and relate what
“ I have seen ; as to the second, the keepers
“ would not suffer me to descend, saying,
“ the bodies of the kings, who built them,
“ and those of the sacred crocodiles were
“ there preserved ; of these, therefore, I
“ can only relate what I have been told.
“ Human industry has displayed all its pow-
“ ers in the distribution of the upper sto-
“ ry. The porticos, the passages, from

(*b*) Recollect, Sir, a Greek is speaking who read his history at the Olympic games, where he was crowned by the most enlightened judges of his age.

“ halls to chambers, from chambers to ca-
“ binets, from cabinets to terraces, and from
“ terraces into other apartments, form wind-
“ ings so numerous, and so different, I was
“ never weary of admiring the art with
“ which they had been constructed. Walls,
“ roofs, all are of stone ; various figures,
“ artfully sculptured, are seen, here and there.
“ Round the halls are stately columns,
“ mostly of white marble. A pyramid, each
“ of its sides two hundred and fifty feet in
“ width, and through which is the descent
“ to the subterranean chambers, terminates
“ the labyrinth.”

Such is the description of Herodotus, and though that of Strabo (*c*), who visited the same place, many ages after him, does not exactly accord, it still confirms this account in general ; describes winding and various passages, and so artfully contrived it was impossible to enter any one of the palaces, or leave it having entered, without a guide. Strabo says, magnificent columns surrounded the principal apartments ; the walls

(c) Lib. 17.

were

were built with vast stones, and, on the top of the roof, an immense platform was seen, which seemed a plain of rock, at beholding which the mind was astonished. It is true he pretends the labyrinth contained twenty-seven palaces, where the States of Egypt assembled, at certain periods, for the discussion of affairs, most important to government, and religion; but it is probable the twelve, mentioned by Herodotus, were afterward divided into twenty-seven parts, or that, in the interval of ages between these two historians, the edifice had been enlarged. Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, and Pomponius Mela described, without having seen, the labyrinth, copying and embellishing the two first authors, but gave no new information. The founder of the labyrinth is unknown; each writer (*d*) names one or several, and mostly

(*d*) Herodotus says the labyrinth was built by the twelve kings who governed Egypt, when Psammetichus, one of the twelve, possessed himself of sovereign power. Strabo attributes its construction to Ismandes, whose body, he says, repose in the pyramid, standing at one of its extremities. Pliny, that it was built by Petesucus or Tithoe, but, as he cites contradictory authorities, he but

mostly different, which variety of opinions indicates it was not the work of one but of several kings.

This monument, regarded by Pliny as the most astonishing effort of human genius, no more is to be found, except amid the ruins of Balad Caroun and Casr Caroun. Hereafter, when Europe shall have restored to Egypt the sciences it received thence, perhaps, the sands and rubbish which hide the subterranean part of the labyrinth will be removed, and precious antiquities obtained. Who can say but the discoveries of the learned were preserved in this asylum, equally impenetrable to the natives and foreigners? If the dust of Herculaneum, an inconsiderable city, has preserved so many rarities, and instructive remains of art and history, what may not be expected from the fifteen hundred apartments in which the archives of Egypt were deposited, since the governors assembled here to treat on the most important affairs of religion and state? But

but augments incertitude. Diodorus supposes the labyrinth is the work and the tomb of Mendes, Pomponius Mela attributes it to Psammetichus.

I must

I must not thus indulge in conjecture: it is time to speak of the lake Mœris, remains of which may be here discovered sufficiently grand to fix the attention. Herodotus (*e*) and Strabo (*f*) mark its scite by declaring the labyrinth was on its banks, and naming the cities that surrounded it. Acanthos, to the south, Aphroditopolis to the east, and Arsinoe on the north. Diodorus (*g*) and Pliny (*h*) confirm these authorities, by placing it twenty-four leagues from Memphis, between the province so called, and that of Arsinoe, which unanimity gives every desirable certitude to truth. Had this lake, however, totally disappeared, like the lake Mareotis, doubts might be entertained, but, in the very place these historians describe, a lake is still seen, called Birquet Caroun, more than fifty leagues in circumference: wherefore, unless we resist conviction, we must here acknowledge the remains of Mœris. By referring to the ancients, and scru-

(*e*) Lib. 2.

(*f*) Lib. 17.

(*g*) Lib. 1.

(*h*) Lib. 5.

pulously examining their testimony, we may, perhaps, obtain light on a topographical question which has been greatly obscured.

“ The labyrinth I have described is still less surprizing, says Herodotus, than the lake Mœris, which is 3600 stadia, or 60 schoeni, in circumference, and equal to the base of Egypt, next the sea (*i*), extending

(*i*) Herodotus determines the schoenos, in Lower Egypt, at four miles, or a league and quarter; thus the 60 schoeni make 75 leagues. Strabo and Diodorus use other adm easurements in their estimation, yet agree with Herodotus. The base of Egypt, then, is determined at 75 leagues, and, being equal in circumference to the lake Mœris, this circumference must also be 75 leagues. I am obliged to be thus circumstantial because this passage has been productive of many errors, most writers, attending only to the first part of the period, in which Herodotus makes the lake 3600 stadia, and giving to each stadium its usual value of about 100 fathoms, have made the lake Mœris 150, and 180 leagues in circumference; but whoever will examine the passage will find the 3600 stadia are determined to be 60 schoeni, or 75 leagues, and, consequently, the author estimates by stadia of 50 fathoms. I know not if this has been before observed, but I know this passage, ill interpreted, has given birth to all the modern debates. Voltaire, with the arm of ridicule, has combated the existence of a lake

“ tending from the north to the south (*k*),
 “ and its greatest depth is three hundred
 “ feet. Two pyramids, built on an island,
 “ near the middle, descend three hundred
 “ feet beneath the waters, and rise as much
 “ above, which prove the lake to have been
 “ dug by man. Each of them has a co-
 “ loffal statue, at the top, seated on a throne :
 “ their total height is a stadium of six hun-
 “ dred feet (*l*). The lake occupies land
 “ extremely sandy, and deprived of springs,
 “ its waters being supplied by the Nile,

lake of 180 leagues ; larger, says he, than Egypt. Rollin and Bossuet, especially, have maintained its existence with heat. Several have diminished its extent, making it some 20 leagues ; and d'Anville, desirous of conciliating all parties, has, in his map of Egypt, created a grand canal, and called it the lake Mœris. He has been no more fortunate than the others. The form and situation of this pretended Mœris directly contradict the most respectable authorities of history.

(*k*) Its present greatest extent is from east to west, but, formerly, it might reach from Arsinoe to the canal by which it discharged itself.

(*l*) Herodotus employs the stadium in both these passages, but having reduced it to 50 fathom, in the first, and restored it to 100, in the second, it is necessary to remark the stadium, here, is 600 feet.

“ which

“ which flows into it six months in the
“ year; these waters are returned to the river
“ during the other six months. In the first
“ period, the fishery daily produces a talent
“ of silver for the royal treasury, and twenty
“ minæ only in the second. The natives
“ say a canal is dug through the mountain
“ (*m*) which extends to, and commands,
“ Memphis. This is a discharge by which
“ the super-abundant waters are carried west-
“ ward, among the Libyan sands. I asked
“ what had become of the earth dug from
“ the lake; and was assured it had been
“ carried to the river, and washed by the
“ current into the sea.”

The relations of Strabo and Herodotus mutually explain each other. “ The province of Arsinoe (*n*) contains the marvelous lake Mœris, which, for its extent, colour, and shores, resembles a sea. Deep as it is vast, it receives, at the beginning of the inundation, the waters, lest they should cover the fields and habitations of

(*m*) I have noted the situation of this canal in the map.

(*n*) Strabo, lib. 17.

“ men,

“ men, through a large canal. When the
“ Nile decreases, these waters are returned,
“ by two other canals (those of Tamieh and
“ Bouch) which, like the first, water the
“ lands: sluices are formed, at the head of
“ the canals, which are opened, at pleasure,
“ to admit or return the waters.” (o).

Though this passage does not determine the extent of the lake, it proves it to have been very great. Diodorus Siculus follows Herodotus, who allows it to have been 3600 stadia, or seventy-five leagues, in circumference. Pliny estimates it at two hundred and fifty thousand paces, near eighty leagues: thus the ancients agree on a point so much disputed by the moderns, none of whom give sufficient proofs of their opinion

(o) Diodorus Siculus pretends it cost 50 talents, or £ 6250, to open these sluices: it is difficult to discover what could occasion him to adopt this fable. Herodotus and Strabo, who visited and carefully examined these places, mention no such thing; nor do Pliny and Pomponius Mela, who, citing all the ancients had written relative to the lake Mœris, would not have omitted a fact so extraordinary. Its great improbability added to the silence of historians demonstrate the falsity of this assertion.

to make it universal, The lake, at present, is only about fifty leagues in circumference ; but this diminution does not prove Herodotus and Pliny were deceived. After so many revolutions in Egypt, within these two thousand years, it may have undergone greater changes.

Examine the map, Sir, and you will perceive the chain of mountains, on the left of the Nile, continued almost from the cataracts to Fayoum, suddenly departs toward Libya, and, returning eastward, forms an immense basin, though lower than the bed of the river. This land was formerly covered by barren fands, because the stream, impeded by downs, and rocks, could not water them. A king, named Mœris, perfectly acquainted with the disposition of the lands, conceived one of the noblest projects that ever entered the mind of man, which he had the glory to execute. He resolved to change this desert into a useful lake, and, when swarms of men assembled had dug and cleared the soil, in various places, he cut a canal, forty leagues in length, and three hundred feet wide, to introduce the waters of the Nile. This grand canal, which

is

is still entire, is known by the name of Bahr Youseph, the river of Joseph, it begins near Tarout Eccherif, and ends at Birquet Caroun, and must have cost immense sums, being, in many parts, cut through the rock. To relieve Egypt from the superfluous waters which, in these distant ages, remained too long on the lands, then much lower than at present, and occasioned sterility, was not sufficient. This great prince rendered them useful to agriculture by cutting two other canals, from the lake to the river, and digging near their mouths sluices which were shut during the increase of the Nile, when the waters, entering through the canal of Joseph, collected in the vast circumference of the lake Mœris, where they were bounded by mounds and mountains. When the Nile decreased these sluices were opened, and a body of water near eighty leagues in circumference, and thirty feet higher than the usual level of the river, (p) formed a second inundation,

(p) The source of the canal of Joseph, being in the Thebais, carried the waters of the Nile, when they began to increase, to the lake Mœris, where being retained

inundation, directed at will: One part was returned to the Nile, for the purpose of navigation, another, branched into innumerable rivulets, watered the fields, and gave fertility even to sandy hills. This work, the most vast and useful the earth ever contained, united every advantage, and supplied the deficiencies of a low inundation, by retaining water which would have uselessly been expended in the sea. It was still more highly beneficial, when the increase was too great, by receiving that injurious superfluity which would have prevented seed-time. Fearful this artificial sea might break its bounds, and occasion dreadful ravages, a canal was cut, through the mountain, by which the superabundant waters were discharged among the Lybian sands. History knows not a work so glorious, nor is it wonderful antiquity esteems it above the pyramids and labyrinth; for with the grandeur of the enterprize it includ-

ed on one side by mountains, and on the other by mounds and sluices, dug on the canals of Bouch and Tamieh, they equalled the height of the inundation, that is to say, were nearly thirty feet higher than the usual level of the river.

ed the happiness of the people. Thus the Egyptians, who detested the kings by whom they were forced to remove mountains that pyramids might be raised ; blessed the memory of Mœris, and his name is everlasting.

This lake has nearly lost all its advantages ; the barbarians, in whose hands Egypt has remained for twelve centuries, have destroyed or suffered most of its monuments to perish. The lake Mareotis is dry, the canal of Alexandria no longer navigable, and Mœris is only fifty leagues in circumference. Were the canal of Joseph cleansed, in which the mud is very deep, the ancient mounds repaired, and the sluices restored ; this lake might again serve the same purposes, might prevent the evils of a too great, and supply the defects of a too feeble, inundation ; might extend, as formerly, from Nesle and Arsinoe to the Lybian mountains, and shew the astonished traveller a sea which man had made. Its depth, of three hundred feet, according to the ancients, may be exaggerated, but much less than it is supposed. Its bottom is a basin, formed by mountains, and is very low ; since the Nile runs into it, through

the canal of Tamieh (*q*); and though mud has, for ages, collected, it is still very deep. Should these reasons prove insufficient to make us adopt the opinion of the ancients, they, at least, should induce us to suspend our judgment, and examine times and places, before we call their writings fabulous.

The pyramids Herodotus describes no longer subsist, and, apparently, did not in the Augustan age, since Strabo does not mention them. On the north of Birquet Caroun we perceive a headland, which, doubtless, was, formerly, an island that ends in a rock, covered with ruins. This, perhaps, was the base of these sepulchres, which having two colossal statues, seated on thrones, on their summits, and rising out of a sea, the waters must have formed a sight such as the whole world could nowhere else afford. I do not give these conjectures as realities, but, you will own, Sir, it was not more

(*q*) The reverse happened, formerly; the superabundant waters were carried to the lake Mœris, by the canal of Joseph, which was deeper, and which preserved them by means of sluices. They were afterwards returned to the Nile, when low, through the canals of Tan ieh and Bouch,

difficult

difficult to build pyramids in an island of the lake Mœris, than those which stand near Giza. But I forbear: I fear having been too circumstantial already, though I have thought it absolutely necessary, while, among so many contradictions, I have endeavoured to discover that truth, which you, Sir, and such as you, passionately love.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

On the productions of the province of Fayoum : Its manufactures, arts, and inhabitants ; its fields, shaded by orange-groves, and clustering rose trees ; the flowers of which, distilled, yield excellent rose-water. The abundant fishery of the lake and canals, and the numerous water fowls. The capital city and its government.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE preceding letter, Sir, affords dis-
cussion, only, to the mind, and ruins
to the eye. He who would tear away the
veil with which a space of three thousand
years has covered these monuments must ex-
pect no better ; but I will now endeavour to
relieve you by an account of the present state
of Fayoum, hoping the subject will furnish
pictures less barren. The most pleasant sea-
son, here, is the approach of winter. The
mild and grateful winds, like those of France,
in the finest days of spring, are still more
pleasing,

pleasing, sweet, and odoriferous. The canals are full to the brim, and the fields covered with grass, vegetables, and corn. The beauties of nature every where abound, for this province is one of the wealthiest and most fruitful of Egypt. Strabo (*r*), eighteen centuries ago, thus described it. “ The province of Arsinoe surpasses all others in beauty, riches, and the variety of its productions. “ It, alone, produces the most perfect olives, “ and from which the Egyptians might make “ excellent oil, were they less negligent, for “ the olive is no where else found in Egypt, “ if we except those reared in the gardens of “ Alexandria, the fruit of which is not proper to make oil (*s*). It abounds in wines, “ corn, vegetables, and seeds of all kinds.” Could this historian return to Fayoum he would find it prodigiously changed; the labyrinth destroyed, marshes, where palaces

(*r*) Lib. 17.

(*s*) Since the canal of Alexandria has become dry, nine months in the year, these gardens, with their olive and all their other trees, have disappeared. I saw some in the orchards near Rosetta: they were very large, and the olives they yielded bigger than those of the isle of Crete, or Provence, from which, I am persuaded, excellent oil might be made.

were ; mud-wall villages, where cities flourished ; canals almost dry, and Mœris reduced to two-thirds of its former extent : but he would recollect the same productions and the same abundance, wherever the waters can penetrate. The Copts still cultivate the olive and the vine their forefathers planted, still gather excellent grapes, of which they make a most agreeable white wine (t). The whole country is now covered with wheat, barley, and dourra, which rise, in succession, uninterrupted, for seven or eight months. The tall flax, the sugar-cane, and vegetables of all kinds, sprout up, almost without culture ; cucumbers, and near twenty species of melons, melting, sweet, and most healthy, adorn the banks of the rivulets ; clustering fruit trees, among which are the date, the fig, the banana, the casia, and the thorny nabc, which produces a small tartish pear, are scattered

(t) Under the Ptolemies, and the Romans, the environs of Alexandria and the Scbennitic province produced very famous wines, but the Mahometans have destroyed the vine plants. They have left none, except in the province of Fayoum. The grapes, in general, which grow in the sandy grounds of Egypt are of an exquisite flavour.

over the plain. Amid this diversity of trees and plants, forests of the rose bush grow near villages. In other provinces this fine shrub only ornaments gardens, here it is cultivated, and the rose water, distilled from its odiferous flower, forms an extensive branch of commerce. Fayoum supplies all Egypt, and the consumption is very great. It is abundantly sprinkled on the face and hands of persons who visit (u). The women wash their bodies with it at the bath, and never dress themselves without rose water. These clusters of rose bushes, sometimes surrounded by the orange tree in flower, produce a charming effect on the sight, and a still more charming one by, their smell. The whole atmosphere is impregnated, and the pleasure of breathing the perfumes of the rose, mingled with the sweet emanations of orange flowers, is here exquisite.

To this wealth of fertility Fayoum adds that of the fishery. The canals and lake swarm with fish, which are caught in prodigious quantities, and eat in the province, or

(u) The rose-water of Fayoum has a delicious odour, which it long preserves: the best is sold at three shillings and four pence a bottle.

carried to the neighbouring cities, and are as cheap as at Damietta. A medin (x) will purchase enough to suffice a man for a day. When the frost and snow of winter is felt in the northern countries, innumerable flocks of birds resort to the lake Mœris, and the canals of Fayoum. The people catch abundance of geese with golden plumage and a most agreeable flavour, fat and delicate; ducks, teal, swans, the skins of which are used like furs, and pelicans, remarkable for their large beaks, in the form of a spatula. These latter, the kings of aquatic birds, sail on the surface of the lake, in numerous families, while the whiteness of their plumage forms a charming contrast with the deep azure of the waters. Modern Egyptians preserve some remains of that ancient veneration in which the ibis, crane, and stork, were held; forbear to net for them, and these birds, confiding in the clemency of man, are almost tame.

What pleasure should I feel could I describe a happy people, amid all this abundance! but, alas! a monstrous government and anar-

(x) A copper coin, plated, worth five farthings.

chy, the enemy of order, and of laws, extinguishes genius, and, like a pestilential wind, depopulates cities, and devours the country and its inhabitants. Men, who, in a climate so pure, and on a soil so fruitful, would possess mild and gentle manners, and enjoy the treasures of prodigal nature, and those benefits the arts produce, become barbarous, superstitious, and miserable, under the yoke of those insatiable tyrants who fatten on their substance. Agriculture languishes, and the sands of Lybia yearly encroach upon its domains; the fine provinces of Heracleotis and Arsinoe are reduced to a third of their former extent, if we only include the productive lands. Were the canals and mounds repaired, they would recover their ancient limits, and flourish as formerly. The climate, the earth, the waters, are the same; men and laws only are changed.

The cities of the crocodiles, of Hercules, and Ptolemais, are replaced by that of Fayoum, which retained a certain degree of grandeur, in the time of Abulfeda. "Fayoum, capital of the province so called, contains public baths, markets, and colleges, which are under the direction of the Sha-
" feites,

" feites, and Melchites (*y*). It is divided by " the canal of Joseph, and surrounded by " gardens." (*z*) Fayoum, at present, is only half a league in circumference, and stands on the eastern shore of the canal. The remainder is destroyed, and the colleges are no more. Houses, built of sun-dried bricks, present a gloomy assemblage of huts; their inhabitants are poor, and deprived of energy, their arts are reduced to some manufactories of mats, coarse carpets, and the distillation of rose water. The town is governed by a cachef, under one of the Beys of Grand Cairo. Several Arab Sheiks, who have lands in the neighbourhood, compose the council, and go to the divan, twice or three times a week, as summoned by the governor; their chief is held in great respect, but the members of administration cannot long enjoy concord; the continual wars, at Grand Cairo, disturb the tranquillity of the provinces, and the possessors of lands and governments are expelled by the victorious faction. The plundered Arabs unite themselves to the Bedouins,

(*y*) Two Mahometan sects.

(*z*) Abulfeda, Description of Egypt.

who,

who, always, are ready to favour malecontents, in hopes of pillage, and who descend, like torrents, from the mountains, and desolate the plains; nor do the undisciplined troops sent against them occasion less disorder, and the husbandman is equally robbed by his enemies and defenders. When the Arabs are repulsed, they bury themselves in the deserts, loaded with spoil, where their hatred against the Turks ferments with the sun's heat, and, when they feel themselves sufficiently strong, they return to commit new ravages. Such is the fate of Egypt, such the evils of despotism.

Permit me, Sir, to finish this letter by an extract from Strabo, which proves to what degree the care taken of the most cruel animals may triumph over their ferocity. "The people who inhabit the prefecture of Arsinoe revere and regard the crocodile as sacred. The priests preserve one in a lake, for that purpose, and name it Souchos (*a*), feeding

(*a*) This word comes from the Greek. The Egyptian name of the crocodile appears to have been Chamfah, which Herodotus calls it, or perhaps Thamsah as called by the Arabs.

“ it with bread, meat, and wine, in presence
“ of strangers, whom a sight like this fails
“ not to attract. Our host, one of the re-
“ spectable persons who shewed us the sa-
“ cred things, conducted us, after dinner, to
“ the lake, taking with him small cakes,
“ roast meat, and a vessel filled with wine.
“ The crocodile reposed on the bank. The
“ priests approached: one of them opened
“ his jaws, another put in the cakes, meat,
“ and wine; after which repast the monster
“ descended, peaceably, into the water, and
“ swam towards the other side.”

The Egyptians honoured the crocodile, because it was consecrated to Typhon, the evil genius, whose fury they dreaded; and imagined they might calm his wrath, and avoid the calamities he inflicted on them, by revering an animal that was the symbol of himself. The eagerness with which the inhabitants of Celebes, at present, seek this monster, the name of Sudara (*b*), or brother, they give

(*b*) Mr. (now Sir Joseph) Banks relates some curious facts concerning the veneration the people of Celebes have for the crocodile. Hawkesworth's Voyages, vol. iii. page 756.

him,

him, and the food they carry him, should also have some foundation in the ancient religion of their country.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

Journey in the desert, toward the Red Sea. The country, mountains, and sands, necessary to cross, to arrive at the monastery of St. Anthony. Observations on the plants, animals, quarries of various marble and flints, found in the desert. Manner in which the monks of St. Anthony and St. Paul live. The prospects from the summit of mount Colzoum: reflections on the great occurrences that have passed there.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

LET US continue our route, Sir. Returning to the Nile, by the canal of Bouch, we leave Maydoum behind us, where is the most southern pyramid of Egypt, several hills, with hamlets, and the ruins of Aphroditopolis, which stood on the eastern shore, where Atfih now stands. The canal we have left emptied itself into the river, formerly, during six months in the year. At present it runs, continually, to the lake Mœris, which

which no longer receives sufficient waters, through the canal of Joseph, half choaked up, *to return them to the Nile.

There is nothing remarkable in Bouch; the houses are of brick, and the roofs in the form of a dove-house, where the pigeons reside, while the Egyptians live below. This custom is observed throughout the Thebais: the houses look tolerably, at a distance, but the abodes of misery in the midst of abundance are every where found on entering.

The chain of mountains, east of the river, approach very near, for several leagues, and leave only a small extent of country, fit for tillage. This long slip of land, at the foot of sterile rocks, is diversified by villages, surrounded by groves, corn, vegetables, and fruit trees. Nature is decked in all her splendor, at the very gates of the desert. Journeying upward, west of the Nile, we perceive Benisouef, a town half a league in circumference, and whose mosques and high minarets, seen through the foliage of trees, present an agreeable prospect. Its other edifices are mere mud-wall huts, or of brick, built without elegance, or taste. The industry of

its inhabitants is wholly confined to the manufacturing of coarse carpets, and their commerce to the productions of their soil. Benisouef is the residence of a Bey, who, like the other governors of Egypt, collects arbitrary taxes, sword in hand, encamping with his soldiers near the villages under his government, several months of the year. Having robbed the labourer of his hire, and torn the fruits of his industry from him, by fear or violence, he proceeds to another part, to raise like contributions. I cannot make you conceive all the oppressions of these tyrants; the troops they command are only composed of outlaws, banished their country, by their crimes, in whose hearts every feeling of nature and pity is extinct. Of this a single trait, which the Comte d'Antragues, who has lately quitted this country, was a witness of, may give you some idea. One of the collectors entered the hut of a poor woman, who had several children, and demanded the tax imposed by the Bey. She pleaded her poverty, and told him she possessed only a mat, and some earthen pots. He searched every where, and, finding a sack of rice, prepared to carry it off. She conjured him to

to leave it, protesting it was her whole subsistence, asking if he would have her, the child she suckled, and all her family, perish with hunger. The barbarian, unmoved by words or tears, took the sack of rice, and the wretched mother, driven to despair, snatched the child from her bosom, and dashed it with force against the ground, exclaiming, Thou, monster, shalt be answerable for his blood ! After this horrid action, her tears suddenly stopped, and she stood motionless, like a statue, while the hardened wretch of a soldier without seeming to be affected, went off with his prey. Such is the fate of the people of Egypt.

Opposite Benisouef is the village of Bayad, partly inhabited by Copts, through which is the road to the monasteries of St. Anthony and St. Paul, situated on mount Colzoum. I will give you a sketch of these wild places, which deserve the attention of naturalists, and likewise of the deserts which lie between the Nile and the Red Sea.

Two leagues north of Bayad is a narrow valley, formed by Gibel Gebey, the mount of the cistern, and Hajar Mousloun, the marked stone, which leads to a sandy plain, called

Elbakara, the cow. On its eastern extremity is the mount Kaleil, or the well beloved ; its extent, which is all barren sand, is seven or eight leagues in width, and much more from north to south. In the hollows of the rocks, and beside where the winter torrents pass, is a little verdure, produced by the Acacia, whence gum arabic is obtained, the sena, the scorpion wood, the twisted root of which is famous for curing the bite of this insect, and some other plants. The ostrich, the chamois, the gazella, and the tiger, which makes continual war on the others, dwell among these caverns, and bound across the sands, where they scarcely can find a blade of grass. Here are flints of various colours, red, grey, black, blue, and all extremely fine in the grain. Their upper surface is indented and rough ; that next the sand, smooth and bright. The naturalist would, no doubt, find, among the cliffs, and the beds of torrents, precious stones, particularly emeralds, formerly common in Egypt. At the foot of mount Kalcil we find springs of brackish water, surrounded by some few date-trees, which thirst renders drinkable, neither wild beast nor man being able to obtain other,

other. Above are the grotts of the hermits, whom the zeal of the first ages of christianity had brought to this fearful wilderness. After climbing Kaleil, we descend into the plain of Elaraba, or carts, as barren and burning as the first. Its surface is parched sand, and scorching rocks surround it. It is crossed by some winter torrents, and, though the sun devours vegetable substances, and robs plants and trees of life, it ripens stones, the most rare, on the sides of the mountains. North of this plain are three marble quarries, red, white, and black: blocks, half cut in the rock, and others, dispersed about, bespeak the labour of men. The Pharoahs hence obtained those hard polished stones with which they coated their canals, and magnificent sepulchres, carting them to the Nile, and bringing them, afterward, on rafts, to the foot of the pyramids (*c*). South of these is

(*c*) Herodotus, Diodorus, and Pliny say, the marbles, with which the pyramids were coated and the canals made, came from the mountains of Arabia; but, as the eastern part of Egypt, between the Nile and the Red Sea, was called Arabia, there is reason to believe the quarries here-mentioned supplied these fine stones. The plain was named Elaraba, because of the numerous carts employed to transport these enormous masses.

another quarry, of fine granite, which has been exceedingly hewn; a reservoir of water, dug at a small distance, supplied the workmen. Hermit's grotts lie beyond, nor could the whole world have supplied a place more wild, or farther from all human intercourse. Having ascended part of mount Colzoum, we arrive at the monastery of St. Anthony, which has no door: the monks draw travellers up through the window, by a pulley. This is a necessary precaution against the Arabs. It is surrounded by a high thick wall, a quarter of a league in circumference, enclosing a large garden, where various fruit trees are cultivated, the cells of the monks, and a small church where divine service is performed. A canal receives the streams of the mountains, and conducts them into the monastery; these, though somewhat briny, supply the necessities of life, and water the vegetables and fruits. The rules of these religious Copts are very austere, and their abstinence rigid, for they drink wine only on the four grand annual festivals. Their food is paste, mixed with the oil of sesama, salt fish, honey, and the productions of their garden. Their doctrine has been corrupted by schism,

schism, and their obstinacy in the errors of Monothelism is extreme; yet they believe they possess absolute power over dæmons, serpents, and wild beasts. When Father Sicard visited them, their superior was in search of the philosopher's stone. While living in constant self-denial of every social pleasure he was in search of gold. These monks highly venerate the grotto of St. Anthony, an obscure retreat, dug in the mountain, where this father of monastic institutions lived, as in a tomb, surrounded by darkness and deserts. A high craggy rock, a league in diameter, separates this convent from that of St. Paul, the impossibility of climbing which obliges them to go round the mountain, which is two days journey. This latter monastery, built on the east side of mount Colzoum, is likewise inhabited by Copts, as poor, pious, and ignorant, as the former.

Seated on mount Colzoum, the Red Sea lies beneath our feet, near the end of which, far off, may be discovered that part where the leader of the Israelites, probably, passed with his whole people through the suspended waves. To the south-east are the famous

mounts Horeb and Sinai, where he received the tables of the ten commandments. The very aspect of these places incites serious contemplation ; we behold around us the country in which the most predominant of all religions first took birth. The Egyptian is past, but not the Jewish, notwithstanding the opprobrium cast upon this reproved nation. The Christian and Mahometan extend over the earth. How fruitful in wonders have been the surrounding country, the mountains, and the sea ! History is full of them, and the barbarians of these nations still preserve their memory.

Let us descend Colzoum, and approach the Red Sea. Its shores are covered with innumerable shells, the form, couleurs, and beauty of which successively fix the attention, and choice is embarrassed by variety. The rocks are variegated by marine plants, the waters abound in corals, some white, others red as scarlet. To these curious objects add the marbles of the mountains, the precious mines they contain, the plants which spring beside the torrents, the rare flints of the sands, and you will allow, Sir, these are things that well deserve the attention

attention of the naturalist. True it is, knowledge must be purchased by so many fatigues and perils, it is necessary to be so long exposed to the plundering Arabs, and the scorching heats of the sun, that it is not surprizing no learned man has hitherto dared to search these deserts. Let us leave them, Sir, and return to the Nile, whose banks are most delicious after such a journey.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXX.

The route from Bayad to Achmounain. Towns and villages on each side the river described, with their various aspects and government; the two branches of the grand canal, Babr Youseph: sacrifice to the sun sculptured on a rock, near Babain: reflections on the subject: remarks on the principality of Malouui, dependent on Mecca, and the stately portico of Achmounain. The adventure of Father Sicard.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE northern breeze invites us to continue our journey. One of the advantages of the situation of Egypt is that of enjoying this salutary wind, more than nine months of the year; beside tempering the excessive heats, dissipating destructive vapours, and bearing the clouds into Abyssinia, which, falling in rain, annually produce the inundation, it likewise impels boats against the rapid

rapid current. Profit we by its favourable breath, and proceed towards the Upper Thebais. Seated on the deck, and borne on waters, whose surface is as high as the banks, we overlook the surrounding lands, and every moment have new prospects. The minarets of Benisouef are lost in the horizon: other villages seem to approach. Here Berangiah half conceals itself under the date-tree shades; yonder Abou Ennour rises, at the foot of the mountain; farther still is Baibai, where the Copts preserve the relicts of St. George, embellished by the rich harvests around it; for of itself it presents nothing but huts, and a small mosque. The beginning of Gibel Etteir, the mount of birds (*d*), is seen to the east; it takes its name from the multitude of kites, hawks, eagles, pharoah fowl, and cormorants, which here collect, and hence dart upon their prey. Doves, and small birds, people the woods, which are at the foot of the rocks: flocks of the ibis, crane, swan, and stork, resort to the banks of the

(*d*.) Birds of prey are very numerous and various in Egypt, because they are not destroyed and find food in abundance. Small birds are more uncommon.

Nile,

Nile, which they cover, during winter : flights of pigeons obscure the air, more numerous in Egypt than in any other country of the globe, where hamlets and towns are vast pigeon houses, and where their dung is collected, with extreme care, to manure the beds of melons.

West of the river is Fechnai, named Fenchi in the times of Greece : a large island opposite raises its verdant head above the waters, in part covered by various vegetables, cucumbers, and excellent melons. Not far distant is Abou Girga, where the Copts have a convent. Sherouna extends along the foot of the mount of birds. That coast is inhabited by independent Arabs, who pil-lage the boats they can surprize ; and, when troops are sent against them, conceal themselves in the deserts, the well springs of which they know, and where the Turks dare not follow them. The storm over, they return, armed, and seize their positions. Travellers should always be on their guard, keep sentinel, and, during night, occasionally fire their guns, nor suffer any boat to come near theirs, otherwise they risk being robbed and massacred.

The eye naturally turns from the sterile rocks, on the east, to views of fruitful fields, on the west, where the land is cultivated to the very brink of the river. In the isle of Sohra, is a hamlet, the scite of which is charming, encircled by trees, corn fields, verdure, and water. What delightful abodes might a polished nation form in the isles of the Nile! The exotics of all hot countries might here be assembled; orange groves, myrtles, pomegranates, and rose-trees planted; the Arabian jasmin, odoriferous shrubs, and American magnolia would thrive here, wonderfully; the banana, the orange, the delicious pine-apple, and every fruit most excellent, would reward their labours. Surrounded by the prodigal wealth of Nature, embellished by art, their days would glide happily away, beneath these enchanted shades and bowers. These, Sir, are but vague wishes, wasted in the wide and senseless air, yet indulge me in the sweet consolation of imagining they shall sometime be realized.

We approach the port of Miniah, a tolerable town, pleasant, populous, and commercial, where a Cacher resides, a custom-house is established, and at which the boats coming

coming from the Said are obliged to stop, and pay duties, according to the merchandise they contain. Here are broken columns, and remains of ancient edifices, which we have reason to suppose were those of Cygnopolis (the city of dogs) placed by Strabo and Ptolemy above Fenchi. Its inhabitants held dogs in great veneration, and the priests fed them with sacred viands, in honour of Annubis, the companion and guardian of Osiris. Strabo (*f*) marks the scite of Oxyrinchus, inland, at some distance from Cygnopolis: scattered marbles and heaps of rubbish, round Behnesa, on the canal of Joseph, determine the position of that ancient city (*g*), where the fish the Greeks called Oxyrinchus was held sacred. The long plain which extends from the Nile to Bahr Joseph is very beautiful; wheat, barley, flax, and beans grow, abundantly, in fields watered by rivulets: the dourra and sugar-cane here rise to a great height; the plants are all vi-

(*f*) Lib. 17.

(*g*) Pococke places Oxyrinchus where Girga now stands, which seems to me inaccurate; for Strabo positively says Oxyrinchus was not on the banks of the Nile, but inland.

gorous,

gorous, and full of sap ; the trees all loaded with fruit, the picture of abundance incessantly delights the eye : but, alas ! it is injured, disfigured by the aspect of the husbandman in rags, and the mud huts in which he mournfully rests, after watering the rich fields with the sweat of his brow, whose produce he must not enjoy : so true it is that wise laws make nations more happy than all the treasures of nature.

Opposite Miniah is the village of Gerabia, and, farther up, that of Saouadi. Here the grottos of the Thebais begin, famous for the austerity of the anchorites who retired hither during the primitive ages of christianity. They extend for twenty leagues, as far as facing Manfelout, and were quarries dug by the Egyptians. The hieroglyphics found in them attest their antiquity.

Above Saouadi begins a forest of dates, which reaches as far as the river. Near this is the isle of Solira, and villages continue, at small intervals, which, by their number, variety of aspect, and numerous inhabitants, diversify and enliven the views. Near Rodda is the mouth of one of the branches of Bahir Youseph, the other is higher, at the village of

of Tarout Eccherif. Norden notices only the first, and Father Sicard the second, but they both remain. Descending the canal of Rodda, the banks of which are charming, we enter the grand bed of Bahr Youseph, on the banks of which is the village Abousir. A league to the south are the ruins of an ancient city, which enrich the small town of Babain. Some distance beyond is a curious monument; a rock smoothed by the chisel, in the body of which a grotto has been cut, fifty feet in diameter, and six deep. The bottom represents a sacrifice to the sun, which is sculptured in demi-relief. On the right, two priests, with pointed caps, raise their arms toward him, and touch the end of his rays with their fingers: behind them two children, with like caps, hold cups for the libation. Three wood-piles, sustained by seven vases, with handles, and placed under the sun, bear slain lambs. On the left are two young maidens, who are only attached to the stone by the feet and back. The Arabs have broken off the heads, and disfigured them with their lances. Various hieroglyphics give, no doubt, the history of this sacrifice, which I believe is meant to

Jupiter Ammon, a symbolical deity, by which the ancient Egyptians denoted the Sun's entrance into the sign of the ram. This animal was consecrated to him, and they then celebrated the commencement of the astronomical year, and the renewal of light. The monument I have described, cut in hard stone, cannot but endure to the latest posterity.

From Babain is Touna (*b*) between which village and that of Abousir the continuance of the remains of an ancient brick aqueduct, by which the waters were conveyed to the foot of the mountains, may be traced. Crossing Bahr Youseph, we come to Tarout Eccherif, where is the principal mouth of this grand canal. Melaoui is three leagues farther to the north, a pleasant town, situated in a fertile plain, where there is a considerable market. Provisions of all kinds are here found in abundance, and exceedingly cheap. The surrounding villages compose a small principality, which was formerly bestowed on Mecca. The Emir Hadge, or prince of

(*b*) Called, by Strabo, the Upper Tanis; near which he marks the course of the great canal. It contains the ruins of a temple of the Sun.

the Caravan, has a right to send a Sardar (*i*) here, as governor; and he returns, to Grand Cairo, large tributes in grain, which he collects from the inhabitants, and which the Emir Hadge carries to the Scherif of Mecca. Four miles north of Melaoui is Achmounain, remarkable for its magnificent ruins. Among the hills of rubbish that surround it is a stately portico, little injured by time, a hundred feet long, twenty-five wide, and supported by twelve columns, the capital of which is only a small cord. Each is composed of three blocks of granite, forming together sixty feet in height, and twenty-four in circumference. The block next the base is merely rounded, and loaded with hieroglyphics, the line of which begins by a pyramid; the two others are fluted. The columns are ten feet distant, except the two in the center, which, forming the entrance, have an interval of fifteen feet. Ten enormous stones cover the portico, in its whole extent, and these are surmounted by a double row; the two in the centre, which rise with a triangular

(*i*) Sardar signifies governor, and general, uniting civil and military power.

front,

front, surpass the others in grandeur and thickness. The spectator is astonished at beholding stones, or rather rocks, so ponderous, raised sixty feet high by the art of man. The surrounding frieze abounds with hieroglyphics, well sculptured, containing figures of birds, insects, various animals, and men seated, to whom others seem to present offerings. This, probably, is the history of the time, place, and god in whose honour this monument was erected. The portico was painted red and blue, which colours are effaced in many places, but the bottom of the architrave, round the colonnade, has preserved a gold colour surprizingly bright. The ceiling, also, contains stars of gold sparkling in an azure sky, with a dazzling brilliancy. This monument, raised before the Persian conquest, has neither the elegance nor purity of Grecian architecture; but its indestructible solidity, venerable simplicity, and majesty, extort admiration. What must the temple, or the palace, have been to which this was the entrance! I confess, Sir, surprize is wonderfully excited at beholding, amid the Turkish and Arab huts, edifices which seem the works of Genii.

Their age increases their value. Escaped the ravages of destructive conquerors, and bearing the impression of ages and ages, they inspire the contemplating traveller with awe. Modern Egyptians view these sublime remains of antiquity with indifference, and suffer them to subsist because to destroy them would be too much trouble. Superstition and ignorance believe they enclose treasures; wherefore, strangers are not permitted to take a faithful drawing: this would expose them to the loss of life, as what happened to Father Sicard proves. While he stood admiring the beauty of this portico, " Do not kindle thy censer, said the " Arab, his guide, gravely, to him, lest " we should be taken in the fact, and some " misfortune should follow. — What dost " thou mean? I have neither censer, nor " fire, nor incense. — That is a joke: a " stranger, like thee, doth not come hither " purely out of curiosity.—Why not?— " I know thy science informs thee in what " place the great coffer is concealed, full of " the gold our forefathers have left us, and " should thy censer be seen, they would " presently think thou camest hither to open " our

“ our coffer, by virtue of thy magic words,
“ and carry off our treasure.”

Such, Sir, is the general opinion of modern Egyptians concerning Europeans, whom they think magicians, and imagine that, when taking the dimensions only of their antiquities, they will be enabled to carry off their treasures; nor will they suffer them to write, or draw, peaceably, but impede them all they can.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

The country from Achmounain to Achmim. Ensina, formerly Antinoe ; its extent, remains of columns, and gates, of beautiful architecture ; not comparable to the portico of Achmounain. The principal towns on the banks of the Nile, with their ancient and modern position. Achmim, formerly Chemmis, or Panopolis. Remains of an antique temple which subsisted in the age of Abulfeda. On the Serpent Haridi, with which the Mahometan priests delude the people.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

LET us quit the portico of Achmounain, and cross the Nile, to visit the remains of Antinoe, thus described by Abulfeda, “Ensina (the Arabic name) standing “toward the middle of the Said, East of the “Nile, and opposite to Achmounain, con-“tains remarkable ruins of ancient monu-“ments.”—“This ancient city (adds the “geographer of Nubia) surrounded by well “culti-

“ cultivated fields, abundant in fruits and
“ grain, is vulgarly called the city of the
“ magi (1), because Pharoah sent hither for
“ them, to come to his court.” I will add
some remarks on the present state of these
places. Adrian, whose shameful vices tar-
nished the splendor of his greatest qualities,
having lost Antinous, his favourite, during
his journey in Egypt, was desirous to raise a
lasting monument to his memory, and found-
ed a city in his name, tracing the plan on
level ground, and building it with royal
magnificence. The city was half a league
in circumference, and contained two principal
streets, forty feet wide, and intersecting each
other, in the centre, at right angles. The
lateral streets were narrower, but equally
straight. The two principal streets ended
with four gates, some of which still remain.

(1) Antinoe was built near the ruins of Abydus, where the Egyptians revere the oracle of the God Besa, one of the most ancient in Egypt, and famous so late as the Emperor Constantius. Ammianus Marcellinus (lib. 19.) says the neighbouring people all consulted it, and assembled, at certain periods, to keep festivals in its honour, wherefore the Arabs called Antinoe, situated near Abydus, the city of the magi.

There are three arched entrances to the most beautiful ; that in the centre is forty feet high, twenty-two wide, and twenty thick ; the two others are less. The fronts of this gate are each ornamented by four pilasters, in basso relievo, the capitals of which, of the acanthus leaf, project considerably. Eight Corinthian columns surrounded this fine gate, and equalled it in height, one of which only has escaped the ravages of time and man ; the rest are broken or destroyed, but their pedestals remain entire. Besides this edifice there are heaps of rubbish seen, in various parts of the city, remains of cornices and entablatures which denote temples or palaces destroyed. If we may judge from the pedestals, found, at intervals, along the streets, they were lined by a colonnade, that formed a portico on each side, where the inhabitants might walk in the shade, which must have produced a charming effect. Exclusive of these embellishments, one of the squares was ornamented by four grand columns of the Corinthian order. Three are destroyed, except the bases ; the fourth is perfect, and about fifty feet high : the shaft is composed of several stones ; on the first of which is an ornament

ornament of oak foliage. On the pedestal is a Greek inscription, half effaced (*m*), which shews it was dedicated to Alexander Severus. The Senate of Alexandria, on which he bestowed many benefits, after erecting the famous column I so highly praised in a former letter, raised these other four, in honour of him, after his victories over the Persians; for the oak foliage, on the pedestal of that which remains, was a token of victory among the Romans. These, Sir, are the monuments best preserved among the ruins of Antinoe, the founder of which did not inscriptions and historians declare, the arches of the gates, (*n*) capitals of the columns, and want of hieroglyphics would shew they were not Egyptian works. They are examples of the good taste and elegance the

(*m*) It begins thus, *To the prosperity of Cæsar Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander, pious, happy—Aurelius being prefect of the new Greeks of Antinoe, &c.* This is legible on two of the pedestals, but almost effaced on the two others. See Father Sicard, *Lettres Edifiantes*, who gives the inscription in Greek.

(*n*) Neither arch nor column of any of the Grecian orders can be found among the remains of ancient Egypt, but stones, astonishingly huge, abounding in hieroglyphicks.

Romans learnt from the Greeks, but not of that majesty, solidity, and amazing grandeur, which the people of Egypt imparted to all their works, and which no other nation ever attained. The remains of Antinoe, though magnificent, are insignificant compared to the portico of Achmounain, although the latter is the most ancient by fifteen hundred years.

Near this city are the remains of the ancient Abydus, where was the oracle of the god Besa, in which place a dervise convent, named Sheik Abada, now stands. Antinoe was peopled by christians, toward the close of the fourth century. Palladius says there were twelve convents of nuns, and as many of monks ; and, perhaps, the ruin of this small city may be attributed to the prodigious number of people who, living in its neighbourhood, vowed celibacy. There are still many coptic monasteries, in the environs, the inhabitants of which are sunk in poverty and ignorance. The fruitful plains which, according to the geographer of Nubia, were round Ensina, have disappeared with the people, and barren sands have usurped their place.

Once

Once more let us embark, Sir, and proceed up the river. Yonder we behold a continuation of grottos, in the mountain in the east, formerly inhabited by Anchorets, whose abstinence is famous in church history. Their food was bread and water; though this austere and contemplative life is less astonishing than it might be thought, in a hot climate where temperance is a law of necessity, and meditation an enjoyment. The Nilc, its groves, harvests, and multitudinous boats, passing day and night, may be seen from these cells, and the thing most surprizing is they had the resolution to remain continually idle, amidst that perpetual motion which they incessantly beheld. These grottos extend as far as Manfelout, which small town, on the west, standing in a fertile country, is governed by a Cachef. The Turks have here several mosques, and a coptic convent stands facing it, which is ascended by means of a pulley; the monks being obliged to take this precaution against the avarice of the Arabs.

The high square dove-cotes of the village Salem are seen at a distance, and, coasting beside a long isle the elbowing Nile brings us

us to Siout (*o*), a large, populous, well built town, where there is a lake dug which serves to water the grounds. Its gardens abound in vegetables and fruit trees ; and its situation, on an artificial mount, denotes it occupies the scite of an ancient city : accordingly, vestiges of Nicopolis are found, where the wolf was held to be a sacred animal.

Half a league from the river, on the same side, stands Aboutig, a very pleasant little place, formerly Aboutis, mentioned by Stephen of Byzantium. The Turks here still cultivate, as in the time of Abulfeda, the poppy, of which they make opium, eagerly swallowed by the rich to inspire agreeable reveries ; the common people content themselves with taking small pills of cut hemp-leaves, fasting, which produce similar effects. Aboutig is governed by an Emir. The yoke of these Arab princes is less galling than that of the Beys ; the people enjoy more tranquillity

(*o*) Pococke wrongly supposes Siout and Anteopolis the same. Ptolemy places Anteopolis higher, and on the other side of the river.—Strabo (lib. 17.) says Lycopolis stood above the canal which runs into the lake Tanis. This is an error in copying, it should be read lake Mœris.

under them, and are not so much exposed to the ravages of the undisciplined troops of Cairo. These elders often discover that impartial justice, humanity, and affecting benevolence, with which the patriarchs governed their families.

The village Settefa, above Aboutig, has succeeded to the small town of Apollo; is at some distance from the river, and partly inhabited by Copts. A very singular accusation was here presented against Father Sicard. Two native christians went to the governor, and told him the foreigner intended to nail up the banks of the Nile, with magical nails, and prevent the inundation by his enchantments. This declaration strangely embarrassed the Arab prince, who would have arrested the learned missionary, had not a janissary, who travelled with him, become responsible for his person; and affirmed the Copts were slanderers. This incident, Sir, will give you an idea of the ignorance and superstition of modern Egyptians.

Among the numerous villages, on the banks of the Nile, is Thema, governed by a Cachef; and, opposite, is a charming and large isle. Silin, anciently Selinon, stands, half concealed,

concealed, on the other side, under the mountains. Kau Elkebira is a miserable place, built on the ruins of Anteopolis, which city possessed a magnificent temple, erected by the Egyptians, according to Diodorus, in honour of Antæus, who was vanquished by Hercules. The portico, only, remains, supported by huge columns, and covered by vast stones, one of which is thirty feet long, and five wide. The golden and azure ceiling has preserved the brilliancy of its colours, but this magnificent portico is full of dung ; for the Turks assemble their herds there, and make a stable of it ; so highly do they value the greatest works of antiquity. The villages Coum Elarab, Mechta, and Shah Toura, extend along the eastern bank, facing Zein Eddin. Tatha is governed by a Cachef, and in part surrounded by an arm of the Nile. Nothing can be more agreeable than the neighbouring plains, more verdant, or wealthy in products, for which they are indebted to the river waters. The city of Venus, on the ruins of which Tatha is raised, could not have found a better scite. After coasting up the river, beside the isle of Shandouil, the high minarets of Achmim

mim are seen afar off. "Achmim, says Abul-
" feda, is a large city of Upper Egypt, on
" the eastern bank of the Nile, where is a
" temple equal to the most celebrated of an-
" cient monuments, and built with stones
" amazing for their size, on which innu-
" merable figures are sculptured. Doulnoun
" (*s*) was a native of Achmim." Though
this city has not retained its ancient splendor
it is still one of the finest in Upper Egypt,
and governed by an Arab prince. The police
is well regulated: the streets are wide and
clean; its commerce and agriculture flourish-
ing. Here are manufactories of cotton
cloths and pottery, which are dispersed
throughout Egypt. This is the same city as
the Chemmis of Herodotus (*t*), and the
Panopolis (*u*) of Strabo. It has lost its an-
cient edifices, and much of its extent; since
the ruins of the temple ~~Abu~~ feda describes
now stand north of the city, the only re-

(*s*) Doulnoun wrote a treatise called *Elmejarebat*,
Experiments, a copy of which should be among the ma-
nuscripts in the king's library at Paris.

(*t*) Herodotus says Perseus was a native of this city,
and that his descendants ordained festivals to him, here.

(*u*) The city of Pan. This deity was adored here.

mains of which are some stones, so large the Turks could not move them, which contain many hieroglyphics, and one of them is sculptured after an extraordinary manner. Four concentric circles are drawn within a square, and the sun is in the centre one. The two following, divided into twelve parts, include, one of them, twelve birds, and, the other, twelve animals, nearly effaced, which seem to have been the signs of the zodiac. The fourth has no divisions, but contains twelve human figures (*x*). The four seasons are at the angles of the square, beside which is a winged globe. This stone, probably, belonged to a temple dedicated to the Sun, and the hieroglyphics indicated his passage through the signs of the zodiac, and his annual revolution; a testimony the Egyptians enjoyed astronomical knowledge from the most remote antiquity. The columns of this temple have been in part destroyed, to procure lime and millstones.

(*x*) Representing, as I suppose, the twelve gods, twelve months, and twelve signs of the zodiac. Herodotus, (lib. 2.) says the Egyptians first divided the year into twelve months, and named the twelve gods.

I must not quit Achmim, Sir, without mentioning its miraculous serpent. Above a century since, a Turkish priest, named Seheilk Haridi, who passed for a saint, died here, and had a tomb built over him, with a cupola, at the foot of the mountain, to which people came from all parts to pray. Another priest, profiting by their credulity, persuaded them God had commanded the spirit of Seheilk Haridi into the body of a serpent, many of which, that are harmless, are found in the Thebais. One of these he had taught; to obey him, and, appearing with his serpent, dazzled the vulgar, by surprizing tricks, and pretended it had power over all diseases. Some happy cures, which nature or imagination wrought, gave it great celebrity; and the serpent Haridi would no longer leave his tomb, except for princes and wealthy persons. The successors of this priest, following his principles, had little trouble to increase the credit of this advantageous error, and they affirmed, exclusive of its first virtue, it was immortal. Of this they pretended to make a public trial; the serpent was cut to pieces, in the Emir's presence, and deposited, two hours, un-

der a vase, where, as they raised it, the priests, no doubt, had the address to substitute another. This miracle was proclaimed, and the immortal Haridi acquired new renown. They profit greatly by their deceit; people come from all parts to pray at the tomb; and, if the serpent appears from under the stone, and approaches the intercessor, it is a sign the sick person shall be cured. You may well suppose, Sir, he appears not till an offering is made worthy of the wealth and quality of the person. In extraordinary cases, when the sick cannot be cured unless the serpent be present, a pure virgin must go and solicit; and, that they may be certain, a very young girl is chosen, who is decorated in a fine habit, and with a garland of flowers. After she has prayed, the serpent, according to the priest's intention, makes circles round the young suppliant, and comes and reposes upon her. The virgin, accompanied by multitudes of people, and vast acclamations, then carries it off in triumph. 'Tis not in the power of reason to persuade these credulous ignorant Egyptians they are the dupes of knaves; they believe as sincerely in the serpent Haridi as in their prophet: the very christians no more

more doubt its virtue than the Turks, but affirm this serpent is the demon Asmodeus, who killed the seven husbands of the wife of Tobias, and that the angel Raphael, after having metamorphosed him, brought him hither, that God might thus deceive infidels. The serpent has acted a miraculous part in the history of man; he seduced Eve, and, at the command of Moses devoured those of the Egyptians, made Alexander of Aboniteichos pass for a god, and now cures the sick people of Achmim. This serpent is of the same species with those Herodotus describes, which were sacred among the ancient Egyptians, who called them Agatho Daimones, (*Ἄγαθοςαιμόνες*) Good Genii; and they were the types of Cneph, a symbolical deity, signifying divine goodness.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

